NEWS / A5
Kapatiran says it's now accepting nominees for president in 2010

NEWS / A2
Sulu Vice Gov. Lady Ann Sahidulla fears arrest, in hiding

WORLD / A27
Obama eases travel, money transfers to Cuba

LIFESTYLE / E1
What it feels like to be a 'ping-pong kid'

Conspiracy theories hound Obama pet dog

WASHINGTON—IT'S the latest conspiracy theory.

Conspiracy buffs are speculating that Bo, the First Dog, was meant for the Obamas all along. That his origi... CONSPIRACY/ A17

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Wednesday, April 15, 2009 ★★ 7 sections / Vol. 24 / No. 126 P15 www.inquirer.net

DOJ links Dacer slay to BW stock scandal

Erap scoffs at report but admits Dante Tan a friend

By Doris Z. Pazzibugan and Fe Zamora

THE MURDER OF PUBLICIST Salvador "Bubby" Dacer and his driver Emmanuel Corbito in 2000 had been linked to the manipulation of Best World (BW) Resources stocks the year before by a crony of deposed President Joseph Estrada, according to Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez.

"There will definitely be a linkage there, the BW and the Dacer cases," Gonzalez said yesterday following a the Court of Appeals' order to pursue the criminal prosecution of BW chair Dante Tan and seven others for stock manipulation.

Tan, a major contributor to Estrada's 1998 presidential campaign, fled the country before he could be brought to court to answer for illegal trading practices that nearly caused the collapse of the Philippine stock market.

Estrada yesterday scoffed at reports linking the double murder to BW Resources.

"If Dacer was the [it [of BW Resources], why kill him?" Estrada said in a telephone interview.

Estrada maintained he had nothing to do with BW Resources. DOJ LINKS/ A6

JUMPING THE GUN President Arroyo names Lt. Gen. Victor Ibrado the next AFP chief of staff a full two months before the incumbent, Gen. Alexander Yano, retires on June 15. RELATED STORY

Ibrado: GMA's choice for next AFP chief hailed

By Tarra Quismundo

"THE SHOULDER WILL BE A LITTLE heavy," the Armed Forces of the Philippines chief-in-waiting said in jest.

In a move welcomed by allies and critics alike, President Macapagal-Arroyo has chosen Lt. Gen. Victor Ibrado as the next AFP chief of staff.

Ibrado, the Philippine Army chief, takes over upon the retirement in two months of AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Alexander Yano, a former burdemate in the Philippine Military Academy from which they graduated in 1976.

Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. announced the selection of Ibrado IBRADO/ A13

E. Timor first lady takes bus home to Pangasinan

By Gabriel Cardenas
Inquirer Northern Luzon

DAGUPAN CITY—LIKE A TYPICAL balikbayan, Jacqueline Aquino Siapno, with 5-year-old son Hadrian in tow, arrived at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport 10 days ago and was met by her mother.

After exchanging greetings, they took a cab and headed to a bus terminal in Pasay City where they boarded a bus bound for her native Dagupan.

The Friday night trip took five hours. At the station, they hailed a tricycle and asked to be taken to their house in Barangay Bonuan Gueset.

But Siapno, 41, is no ordinary balikbayan. She is the interim first lady of East Timor and the wife of that country's national parliament president, Fernando "Lasama" de Araujo.

"It's a private family visit," Siapno told the barangay by way of explaining why her arrival in the country was shorn of the ceremony usually accorded a visiting foreign dignitary.

"But if it were an official state visit, there we would be in a very complicated protocol. But also, I don't really like protocol. That's why I'm the worst first lady anyone could have," she said.

Siapno is East Timor's interim first lady because its president, Jose Ramos-Horta, is unmarried.

"It's great [to be back home], and it's really a spiritual journey for me to come full circle," Siapno said.

She also visited Dagupan in 2001, 2003 and 2005. This time, her visit to her parents' cottage in Bonuan Gueset, a heavily populated barangay facing the Lingayen Gulf, took only 15 days.

Her parents, lawyers Juan Carvajal Siapno and Corona Reblora Aquino, are longtime residents of Bonuan Gueset.

"I didn't meet anyone because I only came here to rest," Siapno said. "I didn't go around and meet people because my life is so exhausting in East Timor and also in other places. I came here basically to relax and unwind." E. TIMOR/ A12

FIRST LADY of East Timor, Jacqueline Aquino Siapno, wife of Fernando "Lasama" de Araujo, national parliament president and 2nd highest official. She has "lasama" attached to her title as President Jose Ramos-Horta is single.

Accused in UP Baguio students' murders freed

By Yolanda Sotelo
Inquirer Northern Luzon

TUBLAO, BANGUED—THE DEtails and alibis of the accused might have been weak, but the prosecution's evidence was weaker.

Or so said Judge Manuel Pastor of Regional Trial Court Branch 50 in acquitting three men accused of the kidnapping and killing of Giancarlo Leung and Tibaic Bagol, both students of the University of the Philippines Baguio, in 2001.

In a 28-page decision issued yesterday, Pastor said the prosecution had failed to prove Raymund Tortido, ACCUSED/ A6

Agriculture usec in Joc-joc probe killed in Cagayan

TUGUEGARAO CITY—AN UNDERSECretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA), whose tasks included the oversight of multibillion-peso presidential pet projects in the north, was shot dead on his way home to a farm in Solana, Cagayan, yesterday morning.

Slain was Gumersindo Lasam, who was also one of the DA regional chiefs who told a Senate inquiry last November how they merely implemented or- AGRICULTURE/ A12

Ex-DOF exec, Chingkoes ordered arrested in tax credit scam

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE SANDIGANBAYAN ANTIGRAFT court ordered the arrest of a former finance assistant secretary and seven others, including the owners of a textile company, who are facing plunder charges for allegedly defrauding the government of almost P76 million through a tax scam from 1994 to 1995.

The Sandiganbayan First Division directed the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to arrest former Finance Assistant Secretary Antonio Belicena Lubo; a former administrator of the One-Stop Shop Inter-Agency Tax Credit and Duty Drawback Center (Center) and former Center deputy executive director Ulderico Andaman Jr.; Center reviewer Anastacia Magdaet; tax specialist Rowena Molonio; couple Faustino and Gloria Chingkoes, Filstar corporate secretary Grace Chingkoe, and Filstar representative Catalina Antonio Bautista.

The Chingkoe couple are owners of Filstar Textile Industrial Corp. (See What Went Before on Page A10.)

The Chingkoe couple are the major suspects in the tax credit scam of the mid-1990s. Some 84 companies they owned allegedly illegally obtained TCCs worth about P5.3 billion.

TCCs are refund payments that export companies are allowed to claim for duties paid on imported materials used for the manufacture of export products. EX-DOF/ A13

RESIGNED Cristina Ponce Enrile only six months into her posting

Enrile wife quits Vatican post; Tuason is new envoy

By Christine O. Avendaño and TJ Burgonio

BARELY SIX MONTHS INTO A HIGHLY coveted posting for Filipino diplomats, Cristina Ponce Enrile has resigned as ambassador to the Vatican.

Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile yesterday said his wife, Cristina Ponce Enrile, resigned from her post before the Holy Week because she was suffering from chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS).

Enrile said the hectic life he had advised his 72-year-old wife to quit her job because of her condition which began in November last year. She presented her credentials to Pope Benedict XVI only on Oct. 27, 2008.

"She developed the same sickness that afflicted (Sen.) Miriam Defensor[-Santiago]," he said, referring to Santiago, who, because of CFS, was forced to take a leave of absence from the Senate for some time. ENRILE/ A13

REPLACEMENT Coveted post goes to Ms. Mercedes "Mercy" Arranza-Tuason.

Thai protesters abandon rally, end standoff

BANGKOK, THAILAND—ANTIGOVERNment protesters threatened with a military offensive called off their three-week rally and abandoned their encampment around the seat of government, pulling Thailand back from a potentially bloody showdown in the streets.

A day after skirmishes in Bangkok left two dead and 113 injured, troops and police tightened their grip on thousands of protesters dug in around Government House, the offices of Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva.

In the face of the overwhelming Army operation, organizers agreed to disperse in a major victory for Abhisit, who had appeared on the verge of losing his hold on power after four months in the job.

"All of my brothers and sisters, please give up and board these buses provided by police," protest leader Veera Musikapong said, clambering onto a police truck to address the crowd.

Demoralized protesters stripped off the red shirts that have symbolized their campaign for the return of ousted premier Thaksin Shinawatra. But others defiantly said their campaign to dislodge Abhisit would continue.

"We have stopped the protest but we haven't stopped the fight for democracy. We will continue the movement," said staunch Thaksin ally Nattawut Saikaur. Thai PROTESTERS/ A17

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

EZ2 — 20 19 / 21 12
SUERTRES — 5 4 9 / 0 3 1 / 7 5 7
SIX DIGIT — 6 0 7 4 0 5
6/42 LUZ-VIS-MIN — 1 2 7 8 33 37 — P11,749,068.00
SUPERLOTTO 6/49 — 7 8 15 19 24 28 — P16,000,000.00

Sulu vice governor fears arrest

By John S. Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

ZAMBOANGA CITY—A PROVINCIAL LEADER who was instrumental in the release of an abducted International Red Cross worker is harnessing nowhere to be seen these days.

Sulu Vice Gov Nur Ana "Lady Inno" Sahidulla has apparently made herself scarce after reports surfaced she was being sought for investigation or arrest.

Sahidulla was one of the local government officials working for the release of the three International Committee of the Red Cross workers being held hostage by the Abu Sayyaf.

She is the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) chair in Sulu and "stood up to the bandits' last ... There's a report she was invited for questioning. Some say she was going to be arrested. We've been trying to contact her, but it seems she's out of touch," said a source who asked not to be named because he was not authorized to speak.

The source said Sahidulla was to be invited for questioning because Alnader Parad, one of the leaders of the Abu Sayyaf, was formerly her personal bodyguard.

"(Sahidulla) informed me the day after Lacaba was released that there was a report she was going to be arrested. Sabi niya (papuntahin daw siya)[her unit she had been ordered arrested]. But I (didn't take her words at) ... really," said Sen. Richard Gordon, PNRC chair.

Gordon said he had not been in touch with Sahidulla since Lacaba's release, but "I have been trying to call her."

The Inquirer has been trying to reach Sahidulla since April 11 but her two mobile phones have been "out of reach."

Two days after Lacaba was freed, the Inquirer spoke with Sahidulla who lamented her treatment by local officials. "Hindi kaboo lang ako at sa pakiramdam ay sang parusa ng mahaba ay (diary Jesus bahin) sa deliberating lagar (because I was only a woman but I was able to get Mary Jean out of a dangerous place)."

She also said she was advised not to issue statements without the approval of Task Force ISFO, officials who are also working for the release of the hostages.

Another source who was also not authorized to speak earlier told of a confrontation between Sahidulla and Western Mindanao Command chief Lt. Gen. Nelson Allaga the night Lacaba was freed.

"Pinagsigi[g] niya si vice governor na magbigay ng anuncong statement or mga media, eagle-apple ngo dito (They were pressuring the vice governor from issuing a statement to the media. There was a confrontation here)," the source said.

Allaga, however, denied the incident happened. "Magkasama po ngo kami eh (We were even together)," he said.

Parimay Usupah of Sahidulla's staff denied the vice governor was arrested for questioning or would be arrested.

"Hindi naman inno po (That's not true)," he said, adding that Sahidulla was in Zamboanga City.

Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro, meanwhile, said he saw no need to ask American help to resolve the 2-month-old hostage crisis, in Sen. Aquilino Pimentel had proposed.

"I'm fortunate that I don't have to answer this. We will not touch the point where we will [have to] ask for help," Teodoro told reporters yesterday.

"If national security is at risk, why will we not ask for help? But right now, we've far from that," Teodoro said.

Pimentel had raised the possibility of seeking US military help to end the crisis under previous terms of the 1951 Mutual Defense Agreement. With a report from Tarra Quismundo

Job losses tapering off, Recto tells GMA

ARRIVING YESTERDAY FROM A JOB-prospecting trip to the United Arab Emirates, President Macapagal-Arroyo was greeted by the good news that job losses resulting from the global financial crisis were "tapering off."

In fact, the government is expecting at least half a million more jobs to be created within the year, mainly from the business process outsourcing sector, according to a report from Economic Planning Secretary Ralph Recto.

"Business process outsourcing is robust and the non-voice services will complement the job generators in the call centers," said Cabinet Secretary Silvestre Bello III, quoting Recto Recto's report.

"Other sectors that have remained resilient are housing, food industry, retail industry and tourism," Bello said.

GRIM update

Recto's report was the main feature of the latest Global Recession Impact Monitor (GRIM), a regular update that Ms Arroyo has ordered done to assess the effects of the global financial crisis on the Philippine economy and industries.

Quoting Labor Secretary Marianito Roque, Bello said the 14,880 employees who lost their jobs months ago have been rehired by their former employers.

Bello said the BPO sector is expected to produce 500,000 new jobs in Mindanao, particularly in South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and General Santos City.

The secretary quoted Ms Arroyo in her presidency conversion to C-2: would also create around 180,000 jobs, he said.

In his report, Recto said "subdue economy and lower income housing has shown steady growth, partly offsetting the gradual decline in high-end residential property."

"Food manufacturers continue to be on a roll as food giants are pursuing expansion plans," he said.

"Malls still report double-digit growth this year as people continue to patronize them heavily."

Recto said tourism was "not seriously affected" with tourist traffic going up within the first quarter of this year.

The Philippine Statistics Office (Nso) said the 209,000 jobs that the President reportedly brought home from her two-day visit to the UAE were "(merely) prospective job vacancies that would come about on the condition that the financial crisis would be ended."

It said actual jobs and job opportunities are dwindling in the UAE, which analysts have said was the worst hit by the global financial crisis in the region.

"Thus, we don't believe that there will be job openings in Dubai or Abu Dhabi in the UAE as the Ms Arroyo is claiming," said Migrante-ME regional coordinator John Leonard Monterona. Gleviehen F. Esguerra with Aurora Aning

Propaganda, Palace says of Erap claim

By TJ Burgonio

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY SCOFFED AT former President Joseph Estrada's claim that even Cabinet members and administration-allied lawmakers had sent feelers about running under the opposition banner in 2010.

Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's former Press secretary Ignacio Bunye said the former President intended to fuel "mere propaganda," said Gabriel Claudio, presidential political adviser.

"He will decline, but I hope he'll be able to identify them. Maybe, we can be of help."

Estrada had claimed that more than 20 personalities, including Cabinet members, senators and congressmen, had expressed interest in aligning themselves with the opposition in the 2010 national elections.

The former leader has been rallying the opposition to unite behind a presidential candidate, and already mentioned 12 personalities for consideration in the camp's senatorial lineup.

Serious candidate

"By coming up with a senatorial line-up, he just wants to show he's a serious presidential candidate," Claudio told reporters.

A former cronie may Estrada had earlier threatened to run himself if the Opposition does not unite under one candidate, denying the known contenders are for now Senate President Manuel Villar of the Nacionalista Party and Sen. Edu Roxas of the Liberal Party.

Claudio also countered opposition claims that the administration coalition was hopelessly divided.

It's all opinions go for the merger of the ruling Lakas-CMD and the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi) following the resignations of party leaders Speaker Prospero Nograles and Cumbestor Boy Boy. Late Pilipino is announced Monday their resignations as presidents of Lakas and Kampi, respectively, to give President Macapagal-Arroyo a free hand in the merger. With a report by Christine O. Avendaño

Expelled RP couple back from Japan

By Jaymee Aning

A FILIPINO COUPLE DEPORTED from Japan for violating the country's anti-human trafficking law arrived in Manila from Nagoya International Airport (Chubu) Monday.

Arlan Calderon, 36, and his wife, Sarah, 30, were on board Japan Air Lines flight 745 that touched down at Terminal 1 at 10:00 p.m.

The Calderons left their 11-year-old daughter Mirabis—who was born in Japan and speaks only Japanese—behind to finish the school year.

Mirabis, who will be looked after by a relative, is a junior high school student in Warabi, a city in Saitama prefecture which is part of the Greater Tokyo Metropolitan area.

On arrival, the couple spent about 30 minutes in the Bureau of Immigration office at Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 1 as they were then escorted by airport policemen to the arrival lobby where local and foreign media were waiting.

The couple made most of their statements in Nihongo to the Japanese reporters. Of the few words Arlan spoke in English, local reporters were able to make out that he and Sarah would eventually be staying with his parents in Tondo, Manila.

"We're still thinking where we will go back," Arlan also answered in English when asked when he and his wife were returning to Japan to see Mirabis.

Later, Sarah said, "Making/hiding/acquiring ID's/different as a parent," when asked how she felt about having to leave Mirabis behind. She said her daughter was "worried (sad)."

The couple, who were met by relatives, left the airport in a car at 11:45 p.m.

The Calderon couple arrived in Japan separately in the early 1990s using fake passports. They were arrested in 2006 after Japanese authorities caught Sarah and the entire family was ordered deported.

The couple went to court to be allowed to remain in Japan as a family, after the Japanese justice ministry allowed Mirabis to remain in the country to finish the school year.

Their appeal was rejected by the Japanese Supreme Court in September last year.

As a humanitarian gesture, the ministry issued 10 five-year visas on deportees' return trip and allowed them to make short visits within the year to see Mirabis.

SEAFARERS' APPEAL

RP should lead anti-piracy voice, sailors say

A LEADING SEAFARERS' group called on the Philippine government yesterday to lead an international response to piracy off the Somali coast.

Around half of the 220 seamen abused 12 ships being held hostage by Somali pirates are Filipinos, according to the International Seafarers Action Center.

"The Philippine government should unify like international community to take bolder steps against these marauding pirates," the group's president, Edwin de la Cruz, told AFP.

"The Philippines, being the home country of most of the crews, should be at the forefront of a international response," De la Cruz said.

As a last resort, the Philippines should also push for the deployment of an international "expeditionary force" with a UN mandate to crush the pirates and rescue the hostages, he said.

De la Cruz said the government should also force ship owners to give crew members the right to refuse to man ships in areas considered high risk.

He noted that "profit oriented" shipping companies were known to transfer into hostile areas to use lower fees, making them vulnerable to attacks.

"That has become a global problem, not just a Somali problem," he said, adding that Somali pirates have vowed to step up attacks after the 25 were killed three pirates and rescued the American captain of a cargo ship attacked last week.

"We should now rally the UN and other democratic countries to exert force and end pirateers against the pirates."

"The UN must now a consensus rule response to the problem," he said.

The Philippines is the world's leading supplier of crew, with over 200,000 sailors manning oil tankers, luxury liners and passenger vessels worldwide, official statistics show.

The Malaysia-based International Maritime Bureau (IMB) piracy reporting centre said that since January there had been 74 attacks compared to 111 in 2008 of 5 months. AFP

Corrections

IN THE APRIL 3 ISSUE, the headline of a story on Page A14 of the Across the Nation—"Scuffle(d) over balloon is FLTR"—carried the wrong figure. The headline should have read, "Hartbilled cuckoo(loon) is 10," not FL.10. The same story also appeared in the last of the story.

* * *

IN THE APRIL 4 ISSUE, an article on Page A19 of the Metro section—"Drug charges filed against core of the 'Alabang Boys'"—misspelled the surname of one of the suspects. His name is Richard Bendels—not Benderts.

* * *

IN THE APRIL 9 ISSUE, the headline of a story on Page A14 of the Sports section—"Iggy-Mini claw tops 3la. Asia golf"—misstated the title of the golf cup. It should have read, "Iggy-Mini claw tops 3la. Hasia golf"—not "Iggy-Mini decrepit 3la. Asia golf."

* * *

IN THE APRIL 14 ISSUE, a front page story—"InCog' was of Hale chief, urged ad final party Councils"—misspelled the surname of a social welfare and development undersecretary. His name is Lilia Biagco—not Pamgco.

The same story also misstated the office position he held by former Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Alfredo Lim. He was neither a former defense secretary nor a presidential candidate.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 888 Publishing, Chino Roces Avenue corner Monforte Street, Makati City, or fax (02) 897-8745 (96). e-mail address: dayduty@inquirer.com.ph.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, April 15, 2009
Octave of Easter: Wednesday
1st Reading: Acts 3:1-10
Gospel: Lk 24:13-35

"Two men, that is—Cleopas (Clopas) and some unnamed disciple, a village seven miles from Jerusalem, [and] they talked about what had happened. While they were talking and reasoning, Jesus came up and walked with them, but their eyes were hindered they did not recognize him.

He asked, "What is this you are talking about?" They were sad and looking sad. Then one named Cleopas answered, "Sir, a stranger you are the only traveler in Jerusalem who doesn't know what has happened these three past few days." And he asked, "What is it?"

They replied, "It is about Jesus of Nazareth. He was a prophet, you know, mighty in word and deed before God and the people. But the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to death. They handed him over to be crucified. We had hoped that he would redeem Israel.

It is now the third day since all this took place. It is true that some women of our group have disturbed us. When they went to the tomb at dawn, they did not find his body, they came to tell us that they had seen a vision of angels who told them that Jesus was alive. Some friends of our group went to the tomb and found everything just as the women said, but they did not see him."

He said to them, "How dull you are, how slow of understanding! You have believed so little of what the prophets have said. Was it not written that they [the Christ] should suffer all this before entering into glory?" Then starting with Moses and going through the prophets, he explained to them everything in the Scriptures concerning himself.

As they drew near the village they were heading for, Jesus made as if to go further. But they pressed upon him, "Stay with us, for night comes quickly. The day is now almost over." So he went in to stay with them. When they were at table, he took the bread, said a blessing, broke it and gave each a piece.

Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. But he vanished out of their sight. And they said to each other, "Were not our hearts filled with ardent yearning when we were talking to us on the road and explaining the Scriptures?"

They instantly set out and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and their companions gathered together. They were greeted by these words: "Yes, it is true, the Lord is risen! He has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road and how Jesus made himself known when he broke bread with them.

Commentary:

The two disciples going to Emmaus did not recognize Jesus. And so, beginning with Moses, [he] expounded to them the things in the Scriptures concerning himself. We can't go by in our eyes, until we meet with crumbling, even prophecy, some promises, or some prayer, that has nothing to do with Jesus after His resurrection. Jesus wanted people to know the mystery concerning himself, not by advertising our opinions, but by showing how the Scriptures were fulfilled in him. He encouraged his followers in the common study of them. Also, there are still people in this world of ours, who do not know of Christ's suffering, death and resurrection. Christ, in instilling Himself in all who call Him, is our hope in life and the perfect example of how we should live a life of love in action.

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No moratorium: 130 schools hike tuition

By Philip C. Tubeza

DESPITE APPEALS FOR a MORATORIUM, 130 colleges and universities across the country are pursuing petitions for a tuition increase before the Commission on Higher Education (CHED).

CHED chair Emmanuel Angeles said that these schools were seeking increases ranging from five to 15 percent.

There are 1,726 public and private tertiary schools across the country.

Angeles said the petitions had been forwarded to the CHED regional offices. "They have to fulfill their publication, 'OK will have the results before classes open (in June)," he said.

Schools asking for tuition hike are required to consult all their major stakeholders, including students, before implementing any increase. They also have to show that the proceeds from previous increases reached their intended beneficiaries.

CHEd appeal

Under CHED rules, 70 percent of proceeds from a tuition hike should go to the faculty and other school personnel, 20 percent to improvements to the school, and 10 percent to management.

Of the 130 schools asking for a tuition hike, 35 endorsed their proposed rate of increase after Angeles appealed to them.

Those schools include the University of Santo Tomas, Angelicum College, FEU-FERN College, and the Technological Institute of the Philippines in Manila and Quezon City.

Three in Metro Manila that moderated their proposed rate of increase include:

Asia Pacific College, Asian Institute of Maritime Studies, Assumption College, Ateneo de Manila University, CAP College Foundation Inc., De Castro S. Lasalle College, Far Eastern University, FEU-East Asia College, Jose Rizal University

Lyceum of the Philippines University, Manila Central University, Manila Law College, Mapua College, National University, O.K. Montessori Center Inc., Philippine College of Criminology, Philippine School of Business Administration in Manila and Quezon City, Reina College, St. Luke's College of Medicine-William H. Quasha Memorial Inc., St. Scholastica's College.

University of Perpetual Help Rizal, University of the East Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Medical Center, and the University of the East in Manila and Caloocan.

Celebrazon

In Celebrazon, those who endured their 100th to response to Angeles' appeal include the Lyceum of the Philippines University in Batangas and Laguna, San Sebastian College-Recoletos in Cavite City, Regentcrest College, STRT, and the Philippine Rhinovaccine Institute.

In Bicol, three schools Immaculate Conception College of Albay, Aquinas College, University of Saint Anthony, Partido College, Ateneo de Naga University, and La Consolacion College in Bicol and Iriga.

In Iloilo City, Notre Dame of Midsayap College, Mediterap, Carabao, Regional Polytechnic College, Kinemadal City, Notre Dame University, Cotabato City, Notre Dame of Marbel University, Notre Dame of Salaman College, Lebak, Sultan Kudarat, and Green valley College Foundation in Koronadal City.

Mindoro Central College in Western Visayas and Cor Jesu College in Davao del, to reduced their proposed rate of increase.

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Kapatiran now accepting nominations for president

ANG KAPATIRAN PARTY (AKP), an accredited national political party with the Commission on Elections, is now receiving nominations for president for the 2010 elections. The deadline for nomination is April 30.

Founded by gun control advocate Rondy Pacheco, AKP promotes a platform based political ideals with clear and specific policy objectives—all aimed at enhancing the common good and promoting the politics of virtue and of duty, transparency and public accountability, stewardship and good governance.

AKP president Fair B. Mandog said, "This innovative approach in process enables both party members and the general public to nominate a candidate for President."

The proclamation of the AKP Presidential candidate is expected to be on or before the end of May 2009 following extensive process by the Party's national electoral committee.

For short listing purposes, nominees to be nominated for President must possess the qualifications required by the Constitution, must accept the founding principles and platform of the AKP to which without any material reservation; must be morally upright, courageous, and competent individual; responsible citizen and parent; and a trusted leader; must have no previous conviction or pending criminal case in court, in the Ombudsman, or prosecutor's office; must have a college degree; must accept and abide by the AKP Code of Conduct; and must not spend more than the law allows. The nomination shall be accompanied by the candidate's must to-do plan/agenda.

Meanwhile, AKP continues to nationwide search for local candidates starting from councilors who will run in the May 2010 election.

"We need candidates for councilors to every town and city under the MNO 1,01 6/4 project. This is the only way to prepare our youth for greater responsibility," Mandog said.

The rules for nominating candidates for other positions up to the Vice Presidency will be announced later.

Baby O'Brien joins Palace press office

TELEVISION HOSTcomedian Cecile Ichiko "Bubu" O'Brien has been appointed by President Macapagal-Arroyo as Assistant Press Secretary, Malacañang officials said yesterday.

Press Secretary Cerge Remonde announced O'Brien to the media at the start of a regular briefing. Bubu will **administer** her oath-taking today.

"She's a veteran news person also, and she will be very easy to work with," he told reporters.

She's now hosting the Tingle's Government Mobile Action" (TGMA) program on the government access television broadcasting Network, a DZRB service program on projects and services of various agencies.

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COPW Serving and Protecting the Filipino Consumer

CONSUMER & OIL PRICE WATCH

An Urgent Appeal to the President, Congress, Business, Civil Society, Academe and Our People:

LET US WORK TOGETHER TO RESTORE FAITH AND INTEGRITY IN OUR TAXATION SYSTEM

April 15, 2008 is the deadline for the filing of income tax returns with the BIR. The Consumer & Oil Price Watch (COPW) appeals to all individual and corporate taxpayers to pay the correct taxes.

Taxes are the backbone of our economic infrastructure. More importantly, taxes fund the government's social welfare and public service programs that aim to improve the quality of life of our people. Especially the marginalized poor.

The most difficult task of the DOF, particularly the BIR, is to require ALL CPA Practitioners to strictly comply with internationally-accepted auditing standards.

1) **The BIR would have determined whether CPA practitioners, who certified the 2006 and 2007 Financial Statements of their clients, complied with internationally-accepted auditing standards of full transparency and disclosure of their client firms' financial conditions.**

2) **We urge the DOF and the BIR, to exercise their political will in imposing punitive sanctions for those that have not complied with internationally-accepted standards for the years 2006 and 2007.**

3) **For those CPA practitioners that have complied, they will automatically be accredited.**

LET US EXPAND THE TAX BASE BY LOWERING THE INCOME TAX RATE OF 30% TO 25% BY 2012

Our present income tax rate of 30% is not at par with the global benchmark of 25%. Lowering the tax rate will not only **boost current tax compliance** but will also encourage the **underground economy to surface.** More importantly, **it will expand our current tax base.**

Our goal, therefore, is to lower the present income tax rate of 30% to **28%** by year **2010** and bring it down to **25%** by **2012.**

COPW PROPOSES THE FOLLOWING URGENT MEASURES TO EXPAND THE TAX BASE

The DOF, BIR and BOC said that as of March 30, 2008, 90% of their operation is computerized. Therefore, they already have an interactive (real-time) link-up for matching the records of BIR and BOC.

1) **The DOF, BIR and BOC have agreed to accredit SGS (Societe Generale de Surveillance) so that even before the shipment arrives, advance information on the volume and value of the cargo are reported to determine the correct amount of taxes and duties due from importers. Misdeclaration or undervaluation will easily be detected.**

2) **The need to create an Independent Oversight Body composed of DOF-BIR-BOC, NEDA, Bangko Sentral, Bankers Association of the Phils. and the Securities and Exchange Commission to monitor tax compliance and recommend measures to further improve tax administration.**

3) **The BIR must ensure that ALL CASH REGISTERS MUST BE DULY REGISTERED. This will prevent the use of cash registers by the underground economy as they are NOT registered with the BIR.**

4) **The BIR must ensure that ALL business establishments must obtain a VAT Number printed on their invoices and stating the beginning and ending range of serial numbers that they will use for the next 3 to 6 months. These data will be published on the BIR website so that anyone can verify which companies are VAT-registered and any business without a VAT No. must be reported to the BIR.**

5) **Furthermore, BIR must HOUSECLEAN the VAT invoices on a quarterly basis. This will flush out the VAT Numbers used by firms who claim input VAT credits from companies which are no longer in operation.**

COPW URGES THE RATIONALIZATION OF INCENTIVES ESPECIALLY FOR THE EXPORT ZONES

WHY? Business establishments enjoy Income Tax Holidays (ITH), and only remit five percent (5%) of their gross income. On top of this, they have Accelerated Depreciation which means that they practically do not pay income tax.

While we want to encourage foreign investments, these incentives put pressure on government's capacity to collect revenues.

Therefore, there must be an urgent review of our investment incentives instead of increasing the VAT rate from 12% to 15% as proposed by UP Economics Professors Dante Canlas, Felipe Medalla and Benjamin Diokno.

COPW issues an urgent appeal to our country's leaders, the President and both Houses of Congress, to set the example not only by filing their income taxes but by their FIRM RESOLVE to restore faith and integrity in our taxation system.

We also call on the Business Sector, Civil Society, the Academe and our People to work together and remain vigilant in monitoring tax compliance and ensuring that the taxes collected are spent properly and judiciously. All for the good of our people. Especially the poorest of the poor.

RAUL T. CONCEPCION
Chairman

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DOJ links Dacer murder to BW stock scandal

Front page A1

"It so happened that Dante Tan is a friend of mine. That's all," he said.

A letter by Estrada's lawyer, written on Malacañang letterhead and addressed to Tan, demanded the turnover to Estrada of BW stocks worth more than P800 million, Antonio Carpio, new Supreme Court associate justice, wrote in a column in the Philippine Daily Inquirer on June 24, 2001.

Carpio cited "the revelation of this document, if proven to be in Dante's possession at the time he was killed, would establish the motive behind Dante's killing."

The appellate court said the Pasig Regional Trial Court should try Tan and his co-accused Federico Salang, Eliseo de Los A., Hermogenes Ledesma, Raul de Castro, Reynaldo Rilwind Co, Dante Juan and Jimmy Juan for violation of the Securities Regulation Code.

Timing

Gonzales said the Court of Appeals' order to pursue the criminal case against Tan and his associates was "significant" in light of the reopening of the Department of Justice's investigation of the Dacer-Corbito case.

Gonzales recommended the original panel of prosecutors that investigated the double-murder case due to the impending retirement of former police senior superintendent Cesar Mancao II, Glenn Dumlao and Michael Rye Aquino from the United States to face trial in the Philippines.

But Gonzales said the Court of Appeals' ruling on the BW scandal was not timed with the reopening of the Dacer-Corbito case. He said he had not read the court decision.

"The chestnut the BW thing is brought into the open, the circumstances surrounding it be revealed, something will be revealed about the transfer of (BW) shares to somebody," he said.

Gonzales did not comment when asked if he was referring to Estrada, whom his former Finance Secretary Edgardo Espiritu described as Tan's business partner in BW investments, whose subsidiary was granted by the Estrada administration an option to purchase shares.

"It could refer to several people," the justice secretary said cryptically.

BW's PR man

Gonzales said Dacer was hired by Tan to handle BW's public relations when the scandal broke out.

"Maybe that was the reason why he came across documents. I could assume he must have had documents before that. That's why he was being pursued for surveillance," Gonzales said.

Abducted

Dacer was abducted on his way to meet former President Fidel Ramos at the Manila Hotel in Manila on Nov. 24, 2000. He and his driver's burned remains were later recovered in Indang, Cavite.

Officials and operatives of the defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force, including Mancao, Dumlao and Aquino—top aides of former national police chief, now senator, Panfilo Lacson—were charged with the murder.

At the time he was abducted, according to Gonzales, Dacer possibly had documents related to BW's questionable stock transactions.

"It is possible, because why would Dacer invite Ramos in a [meeting], which was after he met with Erap [Estrada] in Malacañang," said Gonzales.

Bits and pieces

"(There are) bits and pieces of incidents that when properly pieced together, the puzzle will emerge," he said.

Asked how the Dacer-Corbito murders could be linked to the BW scandal, Gonzales said: "If you could establish that Dacer had those documents on the way to meet Ramos, and that he was also under surveillance and then who gave the order to have those documents framed. That was it then."

Estrada was impeached by the House of Representatives in November 2000 on charges, among other things, of investing with the duties of a public servant when he called their favorites and Exchange Commission chair, Perfecto Yasay Jr., five times to clear Tan of any wrongdoing in the BW insider trading scandal.

Impeachment trial

Then an Iloilo congressman, Gonzales was one of the lead prosecutors in the impeachment trial that followed in the Senate. He handled the BW scandal charge against Estrada.

A team of prosecutors will be created on the BW scandal charges once the justice department receives the decision of the Court of Appeals, Gonzales said.

He said the Department of Justice would also try to locate Tan who, he said, was reported to be living in Taipei, Taiwan, after hiding in China.

Gonzales said the government could request Taipei to extradite Tan.

Accused in UP Baguio students' murders freed; evidence weak

Front page A1

Henry Hans and Ronald Domilies guilty of the charges.

The judge said the prosecution witnesses' testimony were so "inconsistent, contradictory, dubious and unbelievable" that "the denial and alibi of the accused assume strength and significance."

Lorenz said Tingal were abducted in Baguio City on the night of March 8, 2001. Their bodies were found three days later in separate sites in the towns of Mexico and San Simon in Pampanga.

Domilies, Tenorio and Hans were subsequently arrested and detained in Urdaneta City The Criminal Investigation and Detection Group filed charges of kidnapping with homicide against them and two unidentified suspects.

Tears of joy

Investigators earlier said the abductions-killings might have something to do with a fraternity-related conflict in Lorenz was the leader of the Sava Sig ma fraternity at UP Baguio.

As the verdict was read, the accused and their families eventually embraced and shouted in joy and relief.

The relatives of Lorenz and Tingal quietly left the courtroom and declined requests for interviews.

10 years ago

"They endured this case for almost 10 years despite their innocence," Sison's mother said of her son and his roommate.

Tenorio's mother said she felt the pain of the victims' parents and hoped that the real killers would be found and brought to justice.

This was the second legal victory of Tenorio, Hans and Domilies.

In 2007, the Court of Appeals reversed their conviction by a Baguio court of a separate case of car theft in relation to the abduction of Lorenz and Tingal.

Ransom demand

According to court records, the kidnappers demanded P3 million for the release of Lorenz and Tingal.

The ransom demand was reduced to P240,000 and Lorenz's mother, Carlota, was told to deliver the money somewhere in Urdaneta or Villasis on March 10.

While Carlota and a relative were heading to Pangasinan, the kidnappers phoned her and accused her of bringing policemen.

Wala na siyang pag-asagpas pa. Hindi na sa makikita ang iyong anak (There's nothing more to talk about. You won't see your son again)," the caller was told.

The following day, the kidnappers told Carlota to pick up her son in Mexico, Pampanga. But the mom learned that her son's body had been found in Mexico, Pampanga, and Tingal's in San Simon.

The two bodies each bore a bullet wound.

7 witnesses

The prosecution presented seven witnesses, including Jeb Johann Calano, who said he was with the three accused and two others when Tenorio said in the local language: "We will kill Dacorro at 7 tonight."

Calano claimed that he was one part of the group that planned the crime. He said Tenorio told him everything because he was a friend and fraternity brother.

But the decision, Pastor said, while the court commiserated with the Lorenz and Tingal families, it could not allow the detention of the accused based on "improbable, incredible, dubious and obviously fabricated testimony."

He said the denials and alibis of the accused "were weak because these could easily be concocted, but that when "evidence for the prosecution is a weak and betrays lack of conviction on the question of whether or not the accused committed the crime, the defense of alibi assumes importance."

Pastor also said that when the guilt of the accused had not been proven "with moral certainty," it was the court's long-standing policy that the presumption of innocence of the accused "must be favored and his exoneration be granted as a matter of right."

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WHAT WENT BEFORE

Kidnapped and killed

ON MARCH 11, 2001, TWO STUDENTS OF the University of the Philippines Baguio were found dead in separate places in Pampanga.

The body of Bienvenido Leong, 22, a graduating journalism student, was found between 3 and 4 p.m. in a burned-out coogan field in Mexico town, with a bullet wound in the nape.

That of his friend, 20-year-old Eliseo Tingal, was found at 6:30 a.m. about two kilometers away in a rice field in San Simon town, also bearing a bullet wound.

Leong was the son of Charles Leong, a former head of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority project management unit. He was also the nephew of Emond Leong, acting treasurer secretary and president of the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. during the Ramos administration.

No reply

Leong was last seen early on March 9 in front of an establishment in Baguio City.

When he failed to come home, his mother Carlota tried—vainly—to reach him on his cell phone.

A call home his phone finally came, but the voice on the other end said they had kidnapped Leong, and that they wanted P1 million in ransom.

At around 5 p.m. of that same day, Tingal sent her sister in Pangasinan a text message saying that she would spend the night with her friends, including Leong, her best friend.

Tingal, a speech communications graduate and a native of Pangasinan, was said to be in Baguio at that time to get her diploma.

The two were abducted from the Holy Ghost village in Baguio that night.

Aborted drop-off

Leong's family negotiated with the kidnappers, and succeeded in lowering the ransom demand to P240,000.

The kidnappers told Carlota Leong to drop off the money in a designated place in Pangasinan. She left Baguio with a relative at 10 p.m. on March 10.

Along the way, the mother received a call from the kidnappers, who told her that the deal was off because members of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force were with her.

She was not aware of the policemen's presence, but the latter subsequently admitted that they had been tailing her.

Leong and Tingal were found dead hours later.

Fraternity rivalry

On March 14, police said they were now looking into fraternity rivalry as a motive for the murders. They said it was not unusual for kidnappers to kill hostages, or to settle for insanity scene.

Leong headed the Beta Sigma fraternity's UP Baguio chapter at the time. Police investigators showed that Beta Sigma was involved in a rumble with another fraternity a month before the killings.

On March 17, police arrested Ronald Bonalos, 18, Raymond Tenorio, 23, and Bong Sibayan, 21—all members of a fraternity fashioned on the Samahang Ilokano fraternity known as Magsi-I.

The trio were tagged by three of their fraternity brothers, who claimed that they had been recruited to help carry out the crime.

A witness, Jeb Calano, said Tenorio had recruited him and the others to avenge a Samahang Ilokano female member who was purportedly beaten up by the Beta Sigma in January.

Calano also said Tenorio had asked him to come on the night Leong was killed but that he had begged off, fearing for his life.

The case hit a snag in 2002 when the judge handling the case in Hilongos, Pangasinan, was transferred to Manila. Meanwhile, two of the accused—Tenorio and Sison—were allowed to post bail.

Jealousy

In an interview published exactly a year after Leong's death, Charles Leong said his son's fraternity brothers had considered talented scholarship that led to the murders.

One was the "jealousy angle," concerning Leong's alleged relationship with a former officer of the Beta Sigma Lambda Chapter.

The woman, in her late 20s, was the estranged wife of a Baguio ambassador. The woman had allegedly told the Betans that her mother-in-law was "capable of ordering the kidnapping and murder of Dan."

The Leongs said in the same interview that they were not giving up hope of finding justice. **Elisa Vidaña-Aquino Research: PDI Archives**

Plane wreckage found in Cagayan; no survivors

KALAN, Isabela—SEARCH TEAMS have found the wreckage of the light aircraft that was missing on its way to Maconacon town on April 2.

Reports from the Regional Disaster Coordinating Council (RDCC) said the wreckage was discovered on a slope in Sitio Bayang, Barangay San Miguel in Baggao, Cagayan, at about 1 p.m. Tuesday.

Chief Supt. Roberto Ebreo, Cagayan Valley police director and RDCC chair, said no one was killed among the seven people on board the plane owned by Chemtrail Aviation Corp.

A team from the Cagayan and regional police offices on board two helicopters tried to reach the crash site at 4 p.m. to start retrieval operations but strong wind and poor weather forced the group to return to Tuguegarao City.

The plane, piloted by Capt. Tristan Suarez and Capt. Reiner Batz, went missing after it took off from the Tuguegarao City Airport at 8:55 a.m. on April 2.

It lost radio contact with airport authorities and did not reach Maconacon. The trip would have taken at least 30 minutes.

The passengers were Senior Police Officer 3 Dolly Cacatian, Celestino Salango, Abelardo Baggay, Joel Basilio and James Bukilat. Filmore Thayao Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon

Oposa wins environment law award

By Alcuin Papa

THE INTERNATIONAL LAWYER who won a landmark case before the Supreme Court last year for the cleanup of Manila Bay has been given an award from an international environmental organization.

Antonio Oposa has been given the 2009 International Environmental Law Award by the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL), the first Asian to get the award.

The award will be given to Oposa on April 21 in a luncheon in Washington DC.

Outstanding contributions

The award recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to solving environmental problems through international law and institutions.

"As an activist, working on local, national, and international levels, he (Oposa) has devoted his life to the protection of the Philippines' natural resources. His work included his decade-long fight with the government to clean up and rehabilitate Manila Bay, curb over-fishing in the Visayan Sea, fight the unsupervised cutting of the country's forest resources, and establish the School of the Seas, a learning center for sustainable living," the CIEL said in a statement.

The award was first given in 2003.

In a statement, Oposa said he would receive award in behalf of the Filipino people.

"We are a people—natural greatness is our love of Mother Nature. After all, we live in the richest and most beautiful oceans on Earth. However, some of our so-called leaders have distracted our focus to the lobo-produced mindless economic development at the expense of the soul and wealth of life that the Lord in our land, our air, our waters and in our hearts," he said.

Manila Bay cleanup

In 1999, Oposa filed a case to compel government agencies to clean up the bay before it regained vital exact in time, Cavite. Later, the case was elevated to the Supreme Court.

On Dec. 18, 2008, after 10 years, the high court finally ordered government agencies to immediately undertake moves to clean up the bay.

The ruling compelled some 12 government agencies, including the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Department of Public Works and Highways and the Metro Manila Development Authority and other local government units in the watershed of the Manila Bay to restore its waters into good quality fit for contact recreation.

The Supreme Court decision also ordered the implementation of the Solid Waste Management Law, the installation of sewerage systems and the removal of informal settlers along esteros and riverbanks that feed into the Manila Bay.

CIEL is a Washington DC-based nonprofit organization working to use international law and institutions "to protect the environment, promote human health, and ensure a just and sustainable society."

Another lawyer nominated for press freedom award

By Philip C. Tubeza

FOR HIS WORK IN THE CLASH between government-backed senator Jose Miguel Arroyo, lawyer Harry Roque has been nominated for one of the most prestigious press freedom awards in the United Kingdom.

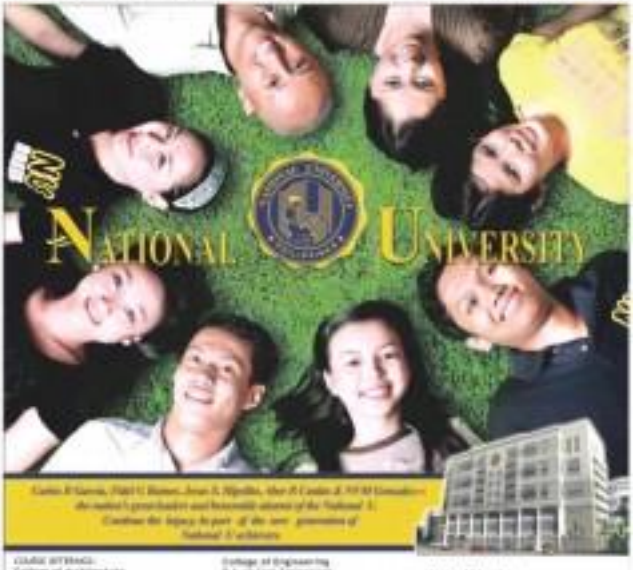
Roque, who teaches at the University of the Philippines, was shortlisted for the Index on Censorship Freedom of Expression Awards which will be given out on April 21.

Index on Censorship is Britain's leading organization promoting freedom of expression and the awards are also sponsored by UK publications the Economist and the Guardian, the Robert Graves Trust and Bindmans, a leading law firm in London.

Last year's Bindmans Law and Campaigning Awardee was U Gambira, the leader of the All Burma Monks Alliance, which organized and spearheaded the nationwide protest in Burma in 2007. Gambira's arrest was the last time he was seen by his family before the military junta launched its bloody crackdown until he was captured in November 2007.

Roque said he was "honored" to be nominated for the Bindmans award alongside Egyptian human rights crusader Gamal Eid, the director of the Arab Network for Human Rights Information (ANHRI) who was recently deported from Sweden.

The other nominees were Uzbekistani lawyer Hairiniso Nikolina who has defended high-profile journalists and newspapers and had been arrested himself, and Malaysia's Malik Imtiaz who is a leading figure in fighting law suits against journalists and bloggers in his country.



Ex-DOF exec, Chingkoes ordered arrested

Front page A1

The government issues TCCs instead of cash refunds, which companies can use to settle tax obligations. Companies can sell the TCCs to other firms seeking to lower their tax obligations.

The eight accused, allegedly conspired in issuing tax credit certificates (TCCs) to Filstar even if it was not qualified to receive them.

Sandiganbayan Sheriff Edgardo Ureta said copies of the arrest warrants, issued by the court on April 3, had been disseminated to the agencies tasked with arresting the accused.

The accused have been free on bail for the graft and malfeasance charges they are facing with other detainees at the antigraft court. Hontiveros, however, is not bailable.

Hold order

The court also ordered the issuance of hold-departure orders on the accused, but Heidilyn Chingkoe is believed to be out of the country after the Fourth Division, where graft charges against him are pending, allowed his months-long trip to Canada and China on condition that he would not file any motion to defer arraignment.

FAUSTINO CHINGKOE

Brother main witness

"That was one more reason he was allowed to travel," lawyer Jose Roncallez told the Inquirer. "The officers would be useless unless he is arrested or he voluntarily surrenders."

Roncallez is the lawyer of the government's main witness in the tax credit scam, Faustino's own brother Jolo. The brothers had a falling out after on "false corporate endorsement" in the Diamond Raiders Corp. Group they jointly owned in 1991, outside of the Filstar group of companies where Heidilyn, Caroline Beatrice, Antonette Ann and Perpetua Audaya is.

However, Chingkoe reportedly fled the country for Canada just hours before the case was filed.

Gov't bungling probe

In February 1994, Felix Chingkoe, a member of Faustino and a key witness in the tax scam, said he was withdrawing from the investigation to protect government hunting of the probe and surround the task force of deliberately weakening the cases by "harassing" crucial witnesses in the tax credit scam.

He was granted immunity by the Ombudsman a few months later in exchange for his full cooperation in the investigation. — Inquirer Research/Tonette Augustine Orejas

WHAT WENT BEFORE: Tax credit scandal

CHINGKOES OWNED BY BUSINESS: man Faustino Chingkoe and his wife Gloria were accused of illegally obtaining tax credit certificates (TCCs) in the mid-1990s.

TCCs are refund payments granted to exporters and manufacturers of Board of Investments-registered products for export who have actually paid duties and taxes on the raw materials and supplies they used.

The scam came when refunds were made on taxes never paid or when tax credits were reportedly granted to some firms that had created spurious firms.

Between July 1993 and May 1994, 11 companies of the Chingkoe Group of Companies reportedly obtained 332 TCCs worth P2.6 billion from the Department of Finance's One Stop Shop Inter-agency Tax Credit and Duty Drawback Center (OSS center).

Closed firm issued TCCs

A study would later show that the tax credits were granted based on a combined reported sales of only P349.72 million, which meant that the cost of materials to manufacture products was several times higher than total sales.

TCCs were also reportedly granted to the Chingkoe companies even when the firms did not export any sale.

For instance, Diamond Building Corp., a Chingkoe subsidiary created specifically to avail of the tax credit scam, was reportedly granted tax credits worth more than P1.2 billion in February–July 1993 and May 1994, 11 companies of the Chingkoe Group of Companies reportedly obtained 332 TCCs worth P2.6 billion from the Department of Finance's One Stop Shop Inter-agency Tax Credit and Duty Drawback Center (OSS center).

Closed firm issued TCCs

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For instance, Diamond Building Corp., a Chingkoe subsidiary created specifically to avail of the tax credit scam, was reportedly granted tax credits worth more than P1.2 billion in February–July 1993 and May 1994.

It was only in 1995 that the Chingkoe companies were found to have fraudulently obtained 1,652 TCCs worth P5.3 billion from the OSS center between 1993 and 1998.

Selling TCCs to Shell, Petron, etc.

Chingkoe's companies sold the TCCs to other companies, and these companies, which included Pilipinas Shell and Petron, used the TCC to pay their customs obligations.

In May 2006, the Court of Tax Appeals ordered Shell to pay the Bureau of Internal Revenue some P870 million, worth of tax liabilities because the TCCs used by the company to settle its obligations in 1998 were found short.

In September that year, the court also ordered Petron to pay around P880 million in excise taxes and penalties for using the fraudulent TCCs to pay its tax obligations from 1995 to 1997.

Last month, the Office of the Ombudsman filed plunder, graft and certain charges against the Chingkoe couple, finance officials and businessmen for allegedly defrauding the government through illegally obtained TCCs.

The plunder charges were earlier filed against them.

In December 2001, a special prosecutorial task force probing the alleged scam filed plunder charges with the Sandiganbayan against the Chingkoes, Shell treasury and taxation general manager Ruthlyn Cruz, Petron general manager Celso Legarda, former Finance Undersecretary Antonio Bernardo and former Finance officials Undersecretary Jr. and Bureau Malvar.

Also charged were officials of the Chingkoe group of companies: Wincent Chingkoe, Caroline Beatrice, Antonette Ann and Perpetua Audaya.

However, Chingkoe reportedly fled the country for Canada just hours before the case was filed.

Gov't bungling probe

In February 1994, Felix Chingkoe, a member of Faustino and a key witness in the tax scam, said he was withdrawing from the investigation to protect government hunting of the probe and surround the task force of deliberately weakening the cases by "harassing" crucial witnesses in the tax credit scam.

He was granted immunity by the Ombudsman a few months later in exchange for his full cooperation in the investigation. — Inquirer Research/Tonette Augustine Orejas

Out of class of chiefs, special units

LT. GEN. VICTOR IBRADO GRADUated from the Philippine Military Academy in 1976.

His class included outgoing Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Alexander Yano, Philippine National Police Director General Jesus Versoza and Philippine Navy Chief Vice Admiral Ibrado.

Ibrado joined the Philippine Army and went to the US Army Infantry School in Fort Benning, Georgia, where he finished as a consistent Commandant's Lister in 1989.

Following duties as intelligence and operation officer in special units, he assumed command of the 11th Infantry Battalion in 1994 in Central Philippines.

He earned his master's degree in Public Administration from the Philippine Christian University in 1998.

In 1999, he was appointed commander of the army's Intelligence and Security Group and the following year was designated assistant chief of staff for intelligence.

In 2002, Ibrado assumed command of the 302nd Infantry Brigade in Central Philippines. In 2003, he commanded the Special Forces Regiment (Airborne).

In a revenge following the February 2006 coup attempt, Ibrado became the 2nd Infantry Division commander of the army.

In March 2007, Ibrado was appointed chief of the Special Operations Command, which oversees the Scout Rangers, Special Forces and the counterterrorist Light Reaction Battalion. He was then assigned head of the Central Command in August 2007.

In January 2008, Ibrado was promoted lieutenant general and is Misamis Army chief.

His awards include the Philippine Legion of Honor (Degree of Commander), eight Distinguished Service Stars, one Outstanding Achievement Medal, five Bronze Gross Medals, 19 Military Merit Medals, a Silver Wing Medal, and 12 Military Commendation Medals.

Ibrado is to retire on March 16, 2010, when he reaches the mandatory retirement age of 56. — Inquirer Research

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Ibrado: GMA's choice

Front page A1

by Mr. Arroyo during a Cabinet meeting at Philippine Army headquarters in Fort Bonifacio yesterday.

Taking over as Army commanding general is the concurrent Lt. Gen. Delfin Bangit, senior aide-de-camp of Mr. Arroyo when she was vice president and later chief of the Presidential Security Group when she was President in 2001.

Bangit, the current commander of the Southern Luzon Command, came under fire for throwing a lavish Dolomna party while he was head of the Intelligence Service of the AFP in 2006.

During the celebration, Bangit's sons danced "Sexy Exy for your groove" to three pole hills at the entertainers in body shirt, he and the code name "strippers."

A member of Phil. Class of 1978, Bangit was promoted to lieutenant general last month. His class had adopted Mr. Arroyo as an honorary member.

'A very good choice'

Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile said Ibrado was a "highly respected military officer" and deserved to be the AFP chief of staff.

Opposition Sen. Benigno Lacson said he knew Ibrado "to be a professional soldier all throughout his military career."

"He is a very good selection," Lacson told reporters, adding that it was a good thing Malacañang announced Ibrado's appointment this early.

House Deputy Minority Leader Imee Marcos also said he had no problem with Ibrado's selection, but slammed Mr. Arroyo's continuing military appointments policy.

"She is bringing back her revolving door policy. She wants to create serious officers for show loyalty," he told the Inquirer.

"I did not know I was the one to be selected but somehow, I already thought about that. But it is a possibility. I am happy that I am given the opportunity," said Ibrado, who will serve until his retirement on March 16, 2010.

39th AFP chief

A fourth-star will decorate the shoulder board of Ibrado's Army uniform on June 12, becoming the 39th Chief of Staff of the 120,000-strong Armed Forces. He follows a long line of army generals chosen to take the post.

"It is a big challenge on my part since I assume my post. But it will not be much of a difference because we are already deep in the operations also ... Of course, the coverage of responsibilities will be larger now," he told the Inquirer.

Ibrado said he was outside the room during the closed-door conference, but stated that the President later congratulated him.

Ibrados told reporters that Ibrado had "trained(d), leadership."

'Soldiers' soldier'

"He is the leader of the largest branch of the Armed Forces, and in the judgment of the President, he is best fit to succeed General Yano," Ibrados said.

Ibrados, an alleged member of Ibrado's PMA class, said Ibrado was already Ysmaelito with the weddings in the GHQ (general headquarters), among them the Armed Forces' strategy to quell insurgency and the military reform program.

"He's a team player, he's a warrior and he's also a soldier's soldier, just like General Yano ... The reforms and programs General Yano had begun will be continued by General Ibrado," Ibrados said.

No politics involved

Backed by in-depth training in the United States and Australia, Ibrado headed many Army units and area commands throughout his over 30-year commissioned career.

Sweeping anti-corruption drive implied politics in the President's choice. Ibrados told reporters that Mr. Arroyo made the announcement early to allow both Ibrado and Bangit a smooth transition into their new posts.

"The President wanted to make the announcement early to allow both gentlemen enough time to wrap up their respective duties and to prepare for their assumptions," said Ibrados.

"The selection was based on individual capabilities. There is nothing political about this decision," he said.

The appointment also earned Yano would end his term on reaching the retirement age, unlike his predecessor three generals, pero Jr., who was extended for three months.

Taking a Cabinet portfolio immediately after retirement, Esperon is currently chief of the Presidential Management Staff. When asked if there was already talk of Ibrado's appointment prior to a Palace post, Ibrados said there was none. With reports from Christine O. Avendaño and Leila B. Salaverria

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2GO

E. Timor first lady takes bus home to Pangasinan

From page A1

Supreme had just completed her junior year in high school at Silver Schools in Saginaw when she migrated to the United States 27 years ago.

She continued her studies at St. Elizabeth High School in Oakland, California.

After high school, she studied political science on scholarship at Wellesley College in Massachusetts, the same institution that produced Madeleine Albright, the first female US secretary of state, and the incumbent, Hillary Clinton.

In 1990, Bayizo acquired a master's degree in political science the University of Lovaina, Belgium, and, after two years here, she completed a doctorate in South and Southeast Asian studies at the University of California in Berkeley.

LOCAL GIRL MAKES GOOD Dagupan City Mayor Alipio Fernandez Jr. (center) welcomes back East Timor's "returnee" first lady Jacquelina Aquino-Bayizo to her hometown. She is accompanied by her father, lawyer Juan Siapno.

CORRESPONDENT

Falling in love

Bayizo first met her husband in 1990 when she visited the Gajmang palace in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Araujo, who was then secretary general of the Resistencia Nacional dos Estudantes de Timor Leste (East Timorese Students National Resistance), was dressed at that time on solidarity dialogue.

"We fell in love and we waited until he was released in 1999," Siapno said.

In June 2007, Araujo won a seat for the Democratic Party. The following month, during the first session of the new parliament, he was elected president of the National Parliament, East Timor's unicameral legislative body.

"Being a first lady is be human, in relationship," Siapno said. You're like a maid. You have to make sure you dress up demand nicely. You basically have to supervise the state. And you have to share a lot of longevity and also support other women and other [causes], such as environment and good governance."

Adviser, envoy, driver

Siapno said her husband was "very lucky" to have a political scientist for a wife because she was "also a silent adviser."

"I'm kind of an unpaid government adviser. I see my role as fully supporting his work as public servant," she said, adding:

"And then, I also raise my son. I try to protect him from a lot of intrusions to our privacy because our house is basically like a public house; our kitchen is like a public kitchen. I have to do household management."

According to Siapno, most Filipinos in East Timor are shocked to know that she does not have a secretary or a household staff.

"I don't have these, so I basically have to do everything. I'm the nanny, I'm the household manager, I'm the political adviser, and sometimes the driver," Siapno said.

FERNANDO "LASAMA" DE ARAUJO, East Timor's second highest official

"Now that I'm with my mother, I'm her maid. I have to clean her house, do my laundry. I haven't had a vacation," she said.

Beautiful East Timor

Having gained independence in May 2002 after 450 years of foreign occupation, East Timor is "still the most beautiful country in the world," Siapno said.

She added: "There are a lot of possibilities in the way the country could develop. We don't want to become like other Asian countries that have become victims of corruption. In East Timor, we still have a lot of people like us who are very visionary and idealistic.

"In other countries, I noticed that if you're not a celebrity or movie star [and] you don't have a lot of money, even if you have good programs, you can't win. East Timor is not like that."

After going through a war, East Timor is now "more or less" politically and economically stable," Siapno said.

She said there was "more and more stability and peace" there, making it, in her eyes, "still one of the most attractive, peaceful places."

Unlike the Philippines, East Timor does not have huge mafia. "We have a very simple superstructure," Siapno said. "It's not economy-capitalist oriented, it's very simple."

"Despite just have what they need—the basic things," she said. "Most of our agriculture products are organic. We don't use chemicals. If you're a capitalist consumerism-oriented person, you'll be very depressed living in East Timor. But if you're a simple person and you like nature, it is one of the most beautiful places to live in in the world."

Professor and author

But more than being a first lady, Siapno would like to be known here as a successful professor.

"Despite have are so successful, it is very," she observed. "In other countries, they would value a professor more because you search for truth, you share knowledge, you produce new scholars."

But here, she said, "nobody asked [me] about [my academic life]. They are only interested in me being the interim first lady. It's ridiculous. I don't understand this kind of culture."

According to Siapno's curriculum vitae posted by the University of Melbourne website, she has held professorial positions in universities in London, Australia, East Timor, Indonesia and California.

Starting August, she will teach in the Seoul National University in South Korea.

Siapno has worked in East Timor as a consultant to international organizations, as a political adviser, and as a workshop facilitator on gender and development in government departments and rural women's groups.

She is likewise a published author.

'Fascinating, challenging'

In 2002, she published her book "Gender, Islam, Nationalism and the State in Aceh: The Paradox of Power, Co-optation and Resistance," a revised version of her dissertation at the University of California in Berkeley.

She is also the associate editor of the Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures and co-editor of "Women in Islam: Knowledge and Contemporary Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Peacebuilding in Regional Contexts."

"That part of my life is so much more fascinating, and challenging," Siapno said. With a report from Inquirer Research

Agriculture undersecretary in Joc-joc probe killed in Cagayan

From page A1

dure for the disbursement of funds from three Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn "Joc-Joc" Bolante, the alleged architect of the P728-mill fertilizer scam.

Mindanao has offered a P1-million reward for information leading to the killing of Lazaro, 61, a veterinarian who rose from the ranks since joining what was then the Ministry of Agriculture in 1970.

It was the second murder of a senior government official in two months. But there have been two other assassination targeting government officials, injuring two.

The Bolante made a similar offer to track down suspects in the March 11 ambush of Public Works Undersecretary Ramon Ignacio. Shot in broad daylight just outside his Manila office, Aquino died in a hospital eight days later.

Lazaro was driving his Isuzu Fargo 4x4 pickup on Tuesday when attacked by two men on an irrigation bridge in Barangay Paul Bilar in second [illegible], police said.

The suspects apparently waited for Lazaro, then immediately fled the scene on a motorbike after the shooting. There were no other witnesses crossing the bridge at that early hour, but the dead were heard by a group of farm workers who happened to be near the area.

The victim's vehicle bore five bullet holes, including two on the windshield, while police recovered at least two cal. 45 shells from the scene.

Lazaro died two hours later while being treated at the St. Paul University Hospital in Tuguegarao.

At the time of his death, Lazaro was concurrently serving the department as regional executive director (RED) for Region 2 (Cagayan Valley), and was also a member of the Board of Regents of the Cagayan State University.

Senior Supt. Virgilio Mario Lazo, Cagayan police director, said investigators are looking into Lazaro's professional and personal activities to establish possible motives.

'Most senior and the best'

In Manila, Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap condemned the killing, saying Lazaro's death was "a great loss not only to his family but to Philippine agriculture and to the Department, which he had served excellently and faithfully for many many years."

"He was the most senior and (arguably the best of all the REDs," Yap said in a statement. "We deeply mourn his death and hope that an immediate and thorough police investigation will soon bring the perpetrator of this heinous crime to justice."

Yap said Lazaro played a key role in advancing two of the DA's major initiatives under the Arroyo administration.

Yap was referring to Lazaro's involvement in the Comprehensive Livelihood and Emergency Employment Program (CLEEP) for Region II, and the P43-billion FIELDS program (Fertilizer, Irrigation, Farm-to-Market Roads, Education and Extension Works, Loans, Dryers and other Post-Harvest Facilities and Seeds).

DR. GUMERSINDO LAZARO, OA regional director, testified at the Senate which was probing the fertilizer scam.

STAFF PHOTO

Exceeded targets

Under Lazaro's watch, Yap added, the Cagayan Valley region exceeded its growth targets for the rice and corn sectors, contributing substantially to the expansion of Philippine agriculture in the past few years.

In Camp Crame, the Philippine National Police (PNP) created the six-member Task Force Lazaro headed by Senior Supt. James Melad to investigate the killing.

Yap and PNP spokesperson Chief Supt. Miriam Barrientos said Malacañang had allowed a P1-million reward for information leading to suspects' arrest.

"[We] are investigating teams of the PNP are continuously working hard to solve these cases, we believe that the most effective will result from efforts by encouraging more witnesses to come out with new information to achieve a breakthrough in the investigation of these high-profile murder cases," PNP Director General Jesse Robredo said in a statement. Reports from Associated Press and Volunteer Pinoys Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon Bureau chief Cecille Suerte Felipe, Inquirer Cagayan de Oro correspondent Jerry Esplanada and Lyn Resurreccion in Manila; and AFP

Cops take over posts of kidnapped teachers

By Jerry E. Esplanada

ZAMBOANGA CITY—EQUIPPED with handguns, handcuffs and nightsticks, they surely don't look like your ordinary public school teachers.

But they are definitely uniformed in the classrooms, according to both the region's Secretary Jesli A. Lapus and Maguindanao Governor Esmael Mangudadatu, who were awarded by acquaintance on Jan. 25.

Quinto and Dulos Reyes are teachers of the Lumbang Gun National High School while Mapandato teaches at the Lumbang Gun Elementary School.

Those schools are on knoll island, some 14 kilometers from Zamboanga City.

Honored

The DepEd has cited the kidnapped teachers' temporary replacements—PO1 Ermilyn Lubrato, PO1 Darwina Sosa, PO1 Joseph Calvin Unal and PO1 Mac Columbano III—for their services.

That recently we gave them plaques of recognition," DepEd-Region superintendent Teldora Alcantara has told the Inquirer.

According to Alcantara, "the Philippine National Police officer have volunteered the services of the police women under the Police for Teachers' program," the agency's response to the kidnapping of public school teachers.

Alcantara explained "all four substitute teachers had teaching backgrounds. They're graduates of education courses (in college)."

"Hired by the PNP only last year, they assumed their new assignments shortly after the abduction of the three teachers. But they did not get seen pay for their services because they're regular PNP employees," she said.

OK as subs

She added it was "okay to have cops around as substitute teachers, but we would rather have (Quinto, De los Reyes and Mapandato) back when the new school year opens in June."

Earlier in a statement, Alcantara pointed out "our teachers come from poor families and risk nothing more than to support their parents, brothers and sisters ... These teachers give their time to nurture the children of Zamboanga City to be citizens."

Meanwhile, Lapus expressed serious concern over the safety of the kidnapped teachers.

"Why do they have to go through this ordeal? The children under their care are deprived of the education they so rightfully deserve," he noted.

No unnecessary risks

At the same time, Lapus said they "appreciate the efforts of the PNP and the military in providing security to schools in far-flung areas."

He also asked the country's 500,000-plus public school teachers, especially those assigned in conflict-affected areas, "not to take unnecessary risks. They should observe precautions. It is also important to have good relations with their host communities."

Somali pirates take 22 more RP sailors as hostage

ATHENS—SOMALI PIRATES ON TUESday took 22 crewmen from the Philippines hostage when they hijacked a Greek cargo ship in the Gulf of Aden, Greece's coastguard maritime ministry said. (See related story on Page A15)

The MV Ivory, a Greek-operated vessel flagged in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, belonged to Chian-Spain Maritime Enterprises Ltd, based in the Greek port of Piraeus, it said.

It became is the ninth hijacking in the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean since the start of the month and follows a vow by pirates to seek revenge after an American military operation that rescued a US captain. AFP

Enrile wife quits Vatican post

From page A1

Santiago returned to work on Monday, at the resumption of Congress sessions after a recollecting break.

Enrile said his wife was suffering from "muscle pain, difficulty in breathing, dizziness and a feeling of weakness." He said he did not know if President Macapagal Arroyo had accepted her resignation.

Tuason is new ambassador

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita last night confirmed that Cristina had quit her post as ambassador to the Vatican and has been replaced by Ma. Shweeden "Shewy" Reinares Arranz-Tuason.

"Yes, she quit a little over a week ago for health reasons," Ermita told the Inquirer by phone.

He said President Arroyo had appointed Tuason as Cristina's replacement early this month, and that her papers had been forwarded to the Commission on Appointments for her confirmation.

"[President Arroyo] knows her (Tuason) personally and she's qualified for the position," Ermita said but admitted he had no personal knowledge of Tuason's qualifications.

He also said he did not know if Tuason was related to the President's husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo whose mother was Leonor Tuason.

Related by law

An Inquirer source said Shewy Tuason was married to the late Boy Tuason, a first cousin of Arroyo.

Tuason is a founding member of Bigay Puso Foundation which distributes care packages to families around Metro Manila and builds walls and solar dryers in 46 provinces.

She is affiliated with the Tuason Balanga Bigay Puso Village in Bataan, the Pro Life Organization and founder of other charitable organizations.

She was inducted as a Dame of the Order of Malta, whose members provide care for the sick and medical services for the poor. They also provide relief goods in disaster-stricken areas.

Progressive disease

Senator Enrile said his wife Cristina had shortness symptoms of CFS as early as November last year but bounced back to health. She started feeling ill again in January and February this year.

She was home in Manila for the Christmas holidays and returned to Rome in early January to report to a call from Pope Benedict XVI, Enrile said.

Cristina was back in Manila at the end of January and was scheduled to go back to Rome after Enrile's 85th birthday last Feb. 14 but she became ill again.

"So I told (her) you cannot perform your job ... you have to resign," Enrile recalled telling his wife.

He said he asked his wife to quit as CFS had "a kind of progression" lasting from six months to even a year.

Doctors' care

Enrile told his wife, "You can't be away from your station too long, otherwise the Vatican Embassy will suffer to avail of the better for you to resign."

Right now, Cristina is under the care of "several doctors" and is taking medication, he said. "She needs assistance in getting up and about her room."

The Enrile' daughter, Katrina, earlier told the Inquirer that her mother had resigned from her Vatican post, citing health reasons. With Inquirer Research

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Thailand on the brink

EDITORIAL

FOR THREE YEARS NOW, THAILAND HAS BEEN IN chaos, politically. The rise to power of populist billionaire Thaksin Shinawatra was met with hostility by Bangkok's middle class, and the traditional elite—generals, bureaucrats, aristocrats—all of whom reinvented his rural-based political machine and his dismissive attitude towards other political factions. At the heart of the confrontation between Thaksin and his opponents were two issues: the interest of the ruling elite of popular democracy, as it upset the delicate balance among contending power groups; and the future role of the monarchy as Thailand's revered King Bhumibol Adulyadej ages and weakens,—and against whom, his critics allege, Thaksin had conspired.

While the king exercises little formal power, the psychological effect for a country whose monarch has been on the throne for a period that covers the Boxer to Aquino administrations for Filipinos cannot be underestimated. H.G. Wells, writing of the death of Queen Victoria, described its effect as comparable to the lifting of a great paper weight, with the wind picking up and scattering ideas like so many pieces of paper. The same can be said of Thailand and its politics, long accustomed to the present king serving as the ultimate arbiter of kingdom's turbulent politics, with its history of public protests, military crackdowns, and repeated constitutional revisions.

Indeed, Thaksin himself was ousted in a 2006 coup that was widely believed to have received the tacit endorsement of the king. To this day, Thaksin has refrained from accusing the king of plotting to oust him, but he has gone as far as to implicate the members of the Privy Council, an advisory body for the king. Bloomberg has been unwilling—or perhaps physically or mentally incapable—of answering this time around (while journalists in Thailand in fine subject, such speculation is current among observers of Thai politics). Without the royal card in hand, the capacity of the administrations of Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva to keep a handle on events may be fatally compromised.

This, at least, seems to be Thaksin's calculations, as his supporters, who elected a government (the Party of People Power, PPP) despite a new constitution seldom essentially by the conservatives who had ousted Thaksin, have taken to the streets in recent months. They are living proof that People Power can be a double-edged sword. Opponents of Thaksin re-coalesced last year as the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) to bring down the popularly elected PPP while proposing the replacement of a purely elected government with one composed of representatives nominated by civic and professional groups.

The PAD's Yellow Shirts (yellow is the royal color in Thailand) famously closed down Bangkok's international airport, and after the courts ordered the PPP disbanded, the current PAD-supported government gained power. More recently, the Red Shirts, as the Thaksin supporters are called, gave the Yellow Shirts police in order to try storming the Asean summit in the resort city of Pattaya, and the capital, Bangkok, has seen, over the past few days, a military-civilian confrontation similar to Manila's May 1, 2001 rebellion, and with much of the same elite-versus-poor rhetoric.

The question before the Thais is whether their research can still intervene, and if he cannot, whether their society can overcome the very fierce division between the urban middle class and the elite on one hand, and degraded rural voters on the other. Democracy is strained as the motivating principle of both sides, but the Yellows, for now, have the army, while the Reds have demonstrated they are not loathe to engage the authorities in a physical confrontation.

For Filipinos, there is the all-too-familiar sight of a political class fighting for its life against the impoverished and dispossessed fighting for a leader they believe was unlawfully deprived of power. There, as here, the military, and not democratic institutions, have proven to be the ultimate decider of whether a government survives or falls.

Publisher Isaac Tanco

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What if Erap becomes president again?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

FORMER PRESIDENT JOSEPH ESTRADA HAS a complete line of Cromwell candidates of the opposition (or at least his cute buddy ng Mining Filipino) for next year's election. He asked Ilocanos—all of the Region of Ilocos and Monday—endorsement Senator Juan Ponce Enrile, former Defense Secretary Gazmin and Governor Eduardo, former Sen. Serge Osmeña, Rep. Rolex Golez and Teddy Casiño, United Opposition spokesman Atty. Toribio, ACSC President of Senate Jun Ejercito, former Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., and incumbent Rep. Gen. Ducoso Lee, Former Sec. Butz Aquino and Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay were listed as runners, in case some of the Top 6 decline to run.

Senate Senate President Enrico Macoils, who was beside Erap, quickly explained that the list is tentative, that the lineup would be drafted in the weeks before the filing of certificates of candidacy. Each party would be given at least three senatorial candidates and therefore the PMD slate would be drastically pruned.

Who would be the opposition presidential candidate?

"The opposition committee will resolve this," Erap said. He repeated his refusal that he himself would run for president if the opposition cannot unite around one candidate. He hopes that this will be resolved before the filing deadline. The opposition would be in a third campaign for the administration candidate.

But wasn't he joining the four-decide opposition unless convinced?

"I have lost to 40 percent of the votes," he replied. "That would give me an advantage over all the others."

But the surveys now him lower than some of the others.

"That's according to the surveys. But the surveys have been wrong in the past. In the last presidential elections, the exit polls said GMA would win in the whole of Metro Manila but she lost in all the cities and municipalities of Metro Manila except in Las Piñas," Erap replied.

He added that he has started efforts to reconcile and unite of the Filipinos, except for a few, so he "Lakbay Binondalond" tour and the reception in all of them. And I have enthusiasm. "You have seen footage of the tour," he said. Indeed, he thousand footage of his rallies in the different provinces and they showed the mass just pouring every one Erap.

He pointed out one more advantage of his over other candidates. He is starting with As he has title as a naturally titled "Ang Hanging mo Pilot, I suggest to As Act his office for "Ang Hanging mo."

He also revealed that he would make a comeback in the anti-crime syndicate. It would dance personally asking him, "Pando ba ng ibang ng mo?" and "Ano ba ang sabi ng mga tao?" about his qualifications to run for president again. Erap would then answer: "Kung gusto mo kayo mga." The commercial would show dance and campaign jazz. Burning his coral way behind, thanks to the celebrity drag.

"Thus, while my rivals would be spending millions for their commercials and advertisements," Erap laughed, "I would be managing from my room and commercials. And I would have my soup and some plastered to billboards advertising the movies and the architects drag, all for free. Manufacturers go to and after the movie his needs the rounds of all the merchandise. I can show it for free in the lower pitches to attract the common bodies way others with the consumer, rich viewers in Hum ina Dune?"

As to the real-life legal question about his qualification to run again for president, Erap said his legal advisers had studied the matter thoroughly and they concluded that there is no bar to it.

"The Constitution bars a sitting president from running for reelection because for the second successive one person, patronage, and finances of the government to his advantage," he said. "But I am not a sitting president. I have been ousted, illegally and unfairly, from the presidency. I missed running for reelection. I am running for a new term. There is a gap between my last term and the next one. So this cannot be called a reelection."

Into the politics, it seemed all his civil rights. That means he can vote. He voted in the most recent election, he said. And if you can vote, you can be voted upon.

What about the sickness clause in the question that could be presented not to seek public office again?

"It is legal document," Erap replied. "the said document is part of the disputed position, not the attorney clauses. There is nothing in the disputed position that bars me from running for my position."

He will be 73 this birthday on April 19. How will he spend this day?

On his birthday and the days before that, he will distribute 30,000 food bags in depressed areas to inform blacks. Instead of hacking the birthday cake with a "bolo," he said, "I will feed the poor hungry. I would spend P1,000 per head for the food of the hungry. That's enough to feed four to say poor families."

If he becomes president again, how will he spend the next six years?

Erap: "Restore peace and order, restore food security and self-sufficiency. Develop the countryside. Squatters inside the urban cities because there is no livelihood in the countryside.

"With peace and order restored, we can free the seized assets to build roads instead of feeding people. Energize the savings, instead of taxpayers' money going to crooked contractors and politicians and being used to make them rich, I would make it all be used to make real farmers make roads."

But how will he solve the Mindanao problem?

"If he almost solved us, you when I was vanished," he said. "Come absolutely but been required by the 1,000 Moro them has given it back to the WILF."

Truth to tell

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

LAST SUNDAY I WOKE UP TO READ FROM my favorite newspaper the following reports from my favorite news president: "In our lives as Christians, we can most prove our love for Christ in the life and His teachings. We must love each other and risk our all for the truth, because God's patience is not."

Lo and behold the following Filipinos were admitted to hospitals from bone attacks, strokes, and blood pressures that went through the roof: Jose Sandoy from reading this. I do know even Ferdinand Marcos did not venture the the Marcos might have believed in the Big Lie, believing that the bigger the lie the more likely it would be believed, but he also believed in the limits of the Big Lie, pushing it just those limits being a pantywaist the Big Lie would have on your lovables on unvaccinated gods of gore, GMA does not.

She often calling upon all of us to battle in Christ's truth, and clearly after flexing the bomb in Thailand in pursuit of what would happen to her love of the presidency in playing ex's, she flew to Davao. The Malacañang website showed the directors of the prospected line "to discuss the 2,251-meter proposed how the Philippines can fill up high-voltage power transmission system for you."

Unfortunately for her, Emmanuel Gobuyo, who truly wishes to battle in the streets of truth and live his life as directed by his namesake, had spent the whole day in the streets of truth, the 36-year veterans of the recreational industry, a former vice chair and director of the Philippine Association of Service Executives Inc., said: "Mr. Arroyo may just be sending taxpayers' money by flying all the way to Davao in the area that countless half-built buildings with their unused escalators, empty malls and starving Filipinos who have lost their jobs." Dubya, Gobuyo added, is itself in dire straits, canceling working visits right and left. He is on the cusp of 150 Filipinos who were stranded in Dubai on visit visa's, not working there or still. Hungry and homeless, the 120 fled to seek shelter in the Philippine Embassy.

It's the OFW situation that needs telling the truth about it. But all we're getting are noises from Malacañang to the effect that our guest and beloved leader is doing everything to make sure the global recession affects everybody else but us. That is not telling the truth of an order that can save a death sentence.

The real problem isn't Dubai or the Middle East, homegrown as that problem already is. The real problem is the United States and Canada, where the bulk of our remittances comes from, and which are the places currently reeling from the recession. The horror stories abound, dramatized by Ben Bernanke who went from being a CEO of an investment bank earning $750,000 per year to being a quiz director man earning $7.20 an hour. He applied for a job after losing his business, and found there was only one available. The one he has right now.

The US is unrecognizable now from what it was only last year. Experts agree that it has been set back by at least 20 years, even if they extend agree on when the recession will be over. Several thousand are losing their jobs every day, and the right depressions. To prospective recipient of the golden egg will not be affected by the point that says it being cumulative is insane. It is also economically irresponsible. This is one case where what you don't know can kill you.

The best thing to do now for most ordinary Filipinos is to save for more rainy days. What is one life-and-death need for a leader who can tell the truth, in these life-and-death times.

Anne Frasier Eustis, who shares GMA's exercise of passion for truth, and who is one point upon which we are bound to differ on, said: Fear, which is not righteousness or the way to Damascus, or the bloody is thing that encouraged people to be silent in the face of evil. Fear is the reason why people don't report crimes, why they don't vote, why they don't speak out when they see injustice. Fear is the reason why people don't report crimes, why they don't vote, why they don't speak out when they see injustice. Fear is the reason why people don't report crimes, why they don't vote, why they don't speak out when they see injustice.

In fact, there is nothing pure about stopping corruption, corruption is the virtue wrought by fear. That is why the only hero Filipinos need is a balikan from jail. And in fact, there is nothing pure about politics, especially the kind that assures we can have a leader we can trust—or at least not distrust at every turn. The only other leader I can admire really who came to mind is Ninoy Aquino, who was a politician's hero and one who will aspire little if she tells the truth. The only way the Senate may improve the wellbeing of Filipinos is to subtract it the very serious political structure of making sure there will be elections next year. The cost is up to us, to embrace the truth. But I am hopeful.

The US gives an object lesson there. For all their hardships now, Americans at least have a leader they can trust. And for all his hardships now, Barack Obama at least can count on his people to follow him. Whether he can turn back the recession is not conscious attainable. What is not debatable is that without him, America would be worse off. It would not just have a crisis of economy, it would have a crisis of confidence. It would not only have less wealth, it would have less direction. It would lose just as much in terms of influence, it would see the death of freedom.

Obama has a point when he says that the people who put America in this pit are not the best persons to place it out of it, given particularly that they offer only more of the same: the lie, the wheels lie, and nothing but the lie.

God did command his followers to ask their all for truth. I may be mistaken, but but I noticed, which was Easter. God as all his glory was not Glorio.

Rural poor battle Thai establishment

THE BLOODY CLASHES BETWEEN THE THAI army and anti-government protesters during the past three days in Bangkok captured the underlying social cleavage between the rural poor of Thailand and the Bangkok-based power elite composed of a mix of royalists, middle-class academics, professionals and retired military officers opposed to former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra who was deposed by a military coup in 2006.

Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva called in the army to break up the violent protests of Thaksin followers after he declined an "extreme state of emergency" following the attack on the venue of the Asean Summit in the resort town of Pattaya by red-shirted Thaksin supporters. The attack forced Abhisit to cancel the summit, which handed him a huge embarrassment with the cancellation of state leaders, including President Macapagal Arroyo, by helicopter from the rooftop of their hotel.

The declaration of state of emergency made it worse for Abhisit. It granted all security forces the power to order all protesters dubbed the emergency. The groups of demonstrators in Bangkok surrounding Government House attacked the prime minister's car as it made its way from the Ministry of Interior, whose staff cowered following the capture of Thaksin supporters who had been looking for Abhisit to confront him with demands for his resignation.

The attack in Pattaya undermined the claim of Abhisit, who was appointed prime minister only four months ago, that his government had restored political stability to Thailand after three years of turmoil following the ouster of Thaksin whose regime succumbed by charges of corruption and abuse of power.

Although Abhisit ordered the army to use "full force" and "prevent as much damage as possible" in quelling the protests, the street clashes left two civilians dead and 115 wounded. The army deployed troops first inside into the crowds and live shots overhead, but Thaksin, speaking from exile in Dubai through CNN, accused the military of lying, saying soldiers used live ammunition.

Analysis

Armando Doronila

Through radio broadcasts, Thaksin called the followers to a "revolution," which he subsequently explained as a "peaceful revolution." He told supporters he was prepared to return to Thailand immediately if they had the guarantee of their safety and that the army had less hesitation this time to move in to remove order in support of the government.

Last year, middle-class demonstrators, clad in yellow shirts, shut down Bangkok's main airports to press for the resignation of a pro-Thaksin government that was in power at the time. The army did nothing to stop them. That government collapsed after the constitutional court ruled that main parties in the coalition should be dissolved for electoral fraud.

After the 2006 coup, the military oversaw the drafting of a constitution to favor non-elected institutions and made it easier for judges to dissolve political parties. Thaksin's supporters won a December 2007 election to restore democracy, but the courts removed two successive prime ministers. Abhisit took office last December after yellow-shirted demonstrators who supported him shut down Thailand's two main airports for eight days and the court dissolved the previous ruling party for vote-buying.

Thailand has experienced 18 successful coups since the absolute monarchy was abolished in 1932. In all the military coups in 1971, 1977 and 1991, King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who has reigned since 1946, stepped in to end the crisis and his intervention assured legitimacy on the government he favored. The king is reported to be in poor health, and has remained silent in the current crisis. His health is a matter of concern at a time when the influence of the monarchy as a stabilizing element in the often turbulent Thai political system is needed. This issue of the king's role is related to the future of Thai democracy that has been fueling bitter rage.

The Thai opposition have united the issue of democracy. One of the protesters' banners declares: "Stop Dirty Council Rule, Bring Back Democracy." The demand captures the underlying cleavage between the rural poor, who in 2001 voted for Thaksin, and the Bangkok elite, embodied by the king's advisers on the council which is the power behind the throne. In 2006 coup against Thaksin, "the poor have taken to the streets to oust the Oxford-educated Abhisit, who represents the face of the establishment to the end poor.

Thaksin was a popular prime minister who built a constituency in the rural areas with credits for farmers and health care and improved infrastructure. Thaksin has asked his supporters to overlook the corruption and abuse of power charges.

The Financial Times observed that "the country has undergone rapid economic development over the past 20 years, empowering urban new classes of people who are now demanding a greater say in their share of power." The opposition has redefined the issue "as democracy versus elitism."

The Financial Times says that fear "has won the support of many Thais who do not necessarily support Thaksin but have united with his more traditional supporters in opposition to the powerful, entrenched and unaccountable centers of power that back Abhisit."

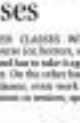
Aseem Prakash Shinha Prajapati Bhillah, director of the Institute for Strategic and International Studies at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, blames the political crisis on the monarchy. "Many people feel that the government in Thailand is determined by an old elite, and this is something that they are protesting against. The time the protesters are going against this establishment, not just Abhisit."

Summer classes

WE TEND TO ASSOCIATE SUMMER CLASSES WITH remedial classes: students are flunked in one or two subjects, are mid-courses (as high school or college) and have to take it again to avoid becoming an irregular students. On the other hand, there were summer workshops and classes, even work internships, for the brightest, usually juniors or seniors, sponsored by schools or corporations.

Then came the "smart" and the "dumb" as if they doomed to a summer of boredom and mirror on it, if he has the money to be off and see the world with dad or mom or with the really smart schools, with their teachers. (Child, what time? Some of our upper-class schools offer summers abroad, as far as Europe.)

Pinoy Kasi



Michael L. Tan

Social science teachers

Fortunately, the summer of not expending more not just for young people but for older ones as well. I am going to confess now and admit my original intention in coming up with a column on summer school is to promote an activity that has been going on for several years now at the UP College of Social Sciences and Philosophy in Diliman, Quezon City. Every summer, an organic activity is conducted for social science teachers, a great opportunity to catch up with state-of-the-art reviews for each of the social sciences.

Here's a sampling of the lectures (with apologies to those whose lectures I didn't include—there are just so many!): Hector Cuenco on local responses to learning, Judy Cuenco-Ocampo on teaching gender through films, Jonathan Makil on the question of English for teaching math and science, Anselmo Castillo on alternatives to assigning a research paper, Aaron Brendon on people-environment studies, Artemio Nicolas (whom I haven't a few words ago) on Asian music, Nate Lapid on mental maps, Joe Lim on political justice.

The sessions run from April 13 to 18 and total P4,000 for the whole workshop. The activity is endorsed by the Department of Education so you should be able to get support from your school. Call Dolores Cuano (981-8500 loc. 2406 or 0915-9959403) for more information. You can also just show up at UP's Palma Hall on April 13 to sign up.

I know that I have mentioned this summer activity for teachers, let me get back to young people. There is apologize here for not being able to give contact information. There's just so much going on, with so many organizations and groups, and I have been so busy the last month with end-of-the-school-year paper work that I just couldn't get around to doing a directory. Many of these activities, including a summer writing camp at the Ocean Sky Monastery in San Jose that includes meditation for children, have already started. Remind me next year to come up with a list of possibilities, maybe so early as March.

But do scout around as well in your neighborhood, like I did, and you would be surprised to find a lot of options.

Swimming, theater, arts

Heat, there are many schools, starting at the preschool level, that offer summer classes, which I think are great especially to prepare very young children who are about to start school in June. These schools also tend to have "specialized" courses, around the arts and crafts, for example, or the most traditional three Rs: reading, writing and arithmetic.

Among the more specialized activities, sports are particularly appropriate for the summer. I remember many years ago being packed off, with several cousins, to learn to swim with "Mr. Lincoln," and I'm glad to see he finally has continued the tradition, now including classes in Makati (Dasmariñas, across the street from Bellevue Square) and Alabang.

I'm glad to see more photo-shooting-mate classes. The UP College of Music has classes in various instruments, as well as ballet. Art and crafts classes are good, too, and I see some small artists' cooperatives and galleries offering different types of classes for children as well as adults.

Philippine Educational Theater Association (Peta) has an amazing line up of summer workshops. Unfortunately, their Children's Theater workshops are all full now but several slots still available: Teen Theater, Production Design, Creative Arts, Creative Musical Theater, Production Design, Creative Dance, Creative Scriptwriting (theater for children?).

I am going to play favorite uncle and give you more information for free because I am on the board of directors and because I think Peta's the greatest theater training group in the world. (I've helped with some of the workshops so that's another bias.) Check our website petatheater.com/workshop/ for details or call Jake Vandall at 7264516. Registration ends this week.

Languages are a good bet. Even one summer can be enough to pick up enough for survival. It doesn't have to be a foreign language; we have 170 Philippine languages to pick from (although a few are spoken now by less than 100 people each).

All said, I know that many of these options will strain family budgets. If you have to keep your children at home—and remember that even those with summer activities will still be spending a lot of time at home—then maximize what you can do with the home environment. Structure the day to include several no-TV-and-no-computer hours. Don't deprive yourself, or your children of the TV or computer altogether, but limit TV time, even on so-called educational channels, to still limited, even distorted. As for the Internet, so much of time goes into games, and search out for your older children's Cyberbanging.

Do provide enough reading materials as an alternative. Offer the kids more encounter allowance so long as it's spent for books and not for computer games or unhealthy snacks. Budgets go a long way these days in one of those other okay bookstores (e.g., Book Sale).

Rather than seeing the children as a burden, the summer can be a time when they actually help out more with household activities. I don't want to use the word "chores" here, getting them into the habit of doing so as a matter of course will be years. Right now my dilemma is maximizing my toddlers' enthusiasm about helping to cook and garden. (I know that in a few years they'll be grumbling when asked to help.

All the publicity around Ike, the new First Dog in the Obama household, reminded me to plug summer as a good time to get a new pet, especially if it's a dog. Ike is a rescue from family that could no longer afford to keep him. Other rescue groups also have pets to offer, and you can slide in a new routine and understand the new dog or cat in their responsibility through the summer—and beyond.

Just one plea if you are going for a dog or cat: Consider adopting from animal shelters. The Obamas did consider that option but ended up with a purebred, a gift from Ted Kennedy. Honestly I can tell you, as a vet, that the mongrels do better than so-called purebreds when it comes to physical and mental health. They are brighter, too, and bravely loyal. As for street cats, you would be amazed at how much more affectionate they can be compared to their snobbish purebred sisters.

Nostalgia or embarrassment?

AS A FILIPINO, YOU DON'T KNOW WHETHER to beam with pride or cringe in shame at the goings-on in Bangkok. The caption to one front page photo yesterday said it all: "Toonie like Isha I." The scene showing a man handing out flowers to soldiers lined up with rifles at the ready and a wide array of young women handing out sandwiches (and flowers) in Marina manned at the corner of Isha and Ortigas at a crucial point of the three-day revolt.

Indeed, many of the Bangkok scenes gleaned from TV footage and live hole uploaded bear an eerie similarity to scenes from 23 years ago: people massed on the streets and confronting soldiers and police in the post, buses used as barriers, protesters being greeted in huge numbers by soldiers with bandanas. The only difference is that the protests have been marked as well by violence: Molotov cocktails, burning buses, and the assassination that stirs the crowds. Some 70 individuals have been reported killed and 170 wounded. The other is that the barrage of a red-shirted woman grabbed by the butt by an irate man, while her companions struggled to free her.

You don't know whether to feel nostalgia for the re-visitation of "People Power" to a foreign land, or embarrassment for the bad example we have set. We have so high moral ground to stand on, either, given how our own "peaceful" show of power now degenerated into mob rule in late December, especially in Cebu and the truly nasty May 1 march to Malacañang.

* * *

JUST months ago, another "peaceful" demonstration in Bangkok succeeded in shutting down the country's international airport, eventually sending the prime minister who was widely viewed as a stand-in, a puppet, for disgraced former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra packing. The airport take-over was but the culmination of months of protest staged in front of Thailand's government center, on allegations that the voting was rigged.

Today, it's Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva's turn to cope with an angry mob. Abhisit's ascension to the throne is done to Thailand's tourism industry. Its economy overall, and its fledgling democracy for about more than just pro-Thaksin or anti-Thaksin sentiment. The protests could also be about the "permanence" of democracy in the country, whether its economic, political and social elite are ready for the rough-and-tumble of Western-style democracy, and the opening of the much wider the traditional elites to populist table-scrapers like the exiled Thaksin.

Surely, there must be some middle ground between the likes of Thaksin who corrupted populist support to amass wealth and power, and those backed by family and cronies and the old elite power structure, including the king, the royal family and the local military, uneasy with ushering the populace will but still making noises about adhering to the will of the people.

There again, you can wonder: What right do Filipinos have to preach the Thai anything, even about Western-style democracy? We may have enjoyed the accoutrements of Republican and civic order for ages, but we have not practiced it for the same yet.

* * *

SPEAKING of which, the threat of Cha-cha isn't over yet, even if putative candidates in the 2010 elections have not just declared but have even started campaigning TV commercials.

The heads of Lakas and Kampi—both supporter of President Macapagal-Arroyo—announced their resignation as heads of their parties to pave the way, they said, for the merger of the two parties. Speaker Prospero Nograles and Rep. Luis Villafuerte, however, reiterate that the "one-no" resolution, which would convert Congress into a unicameral assembly is retained in the merger. Cha-cha, it still in play. Only 10 more signatories are needed for 100 are to come in past.

Perhaps what we have here is really a Plan A and a Plan B. Cha-cha or Cha-cha is really Plan A, for it is the one thing that could ensure GMA of an extended or renewed term. It's the Lakas-Kampi merger, and thus the holding of the 2010 polls, that's Plan B. The alternative since there is last-running out of Cha-cha, had we can be sure that the merger would not be a ploy to ensure that those things don't turn out GMA's way, some Plan A or Plan B.

In our image

Looking Back

Sonbeth A. Cecangbo

HIMAYA SANYA IN MANILA WAS DIFFERENT this year. Many people have discovered the secret and stayed in the city. I was disappointed to find many cars making Iloilo an Good Friday because I wanted to experience the thrill of seeing Iloilo empty. To get the actual feeling of being the last person on earth, you had to drive through the small streets in the Makati commercial and business district without residential buildings.

Even the traditional procession in the navel of Makati, Poblacion, was different this year. The Catholic community in Poblacion usually begins at 4 p.m. and once again started more women—most of them glittering and fully beaded. Designers called in to update those heavy velvet robes with comfortable velvet, treated some active like a mannequin for "Project Runway," resulting in Christ wearing a pseudo-Versace. The Virgin Mary wearing a pseudo-Carolina Herrera looked like this year, some mourning lady probably avoided the sweater person who gave Christ a make-over by changing the only wig for one with long, silky, black hair. I overheard someone in the crowd asking about, "Gano ba ang pa-reboot si Christ? Parang di Christ kasi ito sa mga nakaraang taon."

Next year I should find that Bulacan or Laguna town where few people get on the carriages instead of mannequins to recreate scenes of Christ's Passion. From what I have been told, this province has some movement in balance—the mound of Lenten penitents in Bulacan is now equal to those who stopped momentarily. When he inquired why, he was told, "Ayaw kasi nung nakita si Cristo Christ ban ko pa eh." Another friend went to a town in Bulacan to catch the Arnibalan or Pasyon Play and was disappointed to find out it had been cancelled that morning. Why? "Kasi, sir, wala pong artista." "Nahirapan po ang bayan [The virgin got pregnant]."

Start ups when I was doing research on Holy Week rituals. I learned too that the roman played Judas and white for the Arpita, by the objects they hold: (a basin) with three bloody bars of Christ is Santo Entierro, white linen and a runner complete Ano Pedro). In the past people knew all these iconographic symbols and the stories behind the images. And in the age of PSP and iPod, all these are lost to a younger generation.

In the museum of Inclusion church in Bohol, there is a rare image of St. Lazarus wrapped in bandages, as described in the scriptures, returning from the dead. The same image elicits shudder to the people in the area because Inquisitor Lazarus, not known San Lazaro. For a new generation, San Lazaro is now "The Mummy."

While reading Emily Brontean Cooper's "Sex Objects Woman in the Philippines," published in 1908, I noted to connect the "Bodies of Jose" time to the Bodies Exhibit and the image of Christ in the Ark—that was "dressed for various festivals in various ways sometimes in evening dress, with white shirt, diamond stud, rings on the fingers, patent leather shoes, and a derby hat. Sometimes the figure was dressed in road robes with long purple mantle and gilded crown on the head, on occasions the figure was arrayed in flowing white robes and was brought from the cemetery into town and borne at the head of a great parade."

All the images of Christ I have seen come with conduits. This one no doors with a derby hat is quite interesting.

It all goes to show that people try to make religion and the Bible stories relevant in their lives by updating the symbols. Even where in churches all over the archipelago people make the divine in our image. We are but do not notice, and it will take another generation and historians to study this as a means to help us further understand why we are the ways we are.

Comments are welcome at ocecangbo@inquirer.info

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Cleanse our beloved nation of 'trapos'

THE IN REACTION TO THE EDITORIAL titled "Failure of corpus." (Inquirer, 3/29/09)

The country needs a lot of washing machines and detergents to wash all the "dirty rags" that have been the cause of our social, political and economic ills. And we need to distribute these machines and detergents all over the country.

We need the likes of Winston Churchill, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr, Nelson Mandela, Pope John Paul II and Franklin D. Roosevelt and our own Ramon Magsaysay to save our nation and make it safe for Filipinos and all those who come to our shores from the outside with good hearts.

Only then can we claim to be a truly democratic country where the will of the majority reigns supreme over the personal ambitions of elite.

Tony Blair was right when he said that "Leaders no matter how long they are in the position, will always 'have their day' and should find it in themselves to relinquish power"

Filipino trapos from Ulatan Bluza pagal-Arroyo down to the lowest barangay official in this country should learn from him. They are glued to their seats and /or relinquish their positions only to members of their own families.

Some people are suggesting that Batangas Governor Ed Panlilio (who has taken a "leave" from his priestly function to govern his province) run for president of this country, and the number of Filipinos seemingly entertaining the idea is growing. This only shows that our Filipino brain's final function otherwise is the ranks of traditional politicians.

Politics, according to Blair, is a noble profession, though not always nobly pursued. That is very true in this country where politics has been used mainly by those in power to serve their own personal, not public, interests.

—RAMON SEPULVEDA, Cebu
CebRayvega@aol.com

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4. Mambog - Niog

5. Mambog - Molino Road

6. Daang Hari - Molino Road

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Thai protesters abandon rally, end standoff

From page A1

Police and the Army said the protesters not involved in Monday's unrest violence would be allowed to return home, mostly to the country's northeast that is the heartland of Thaksin's support.

But the "hardcore" figures were being detained, with premier Isabel being imminent arrest, authorities said.

State of emergency remains

Troops on Monday used tear gas and automatic weapons fire to clear demonstrators from the core of Bangkok, which remains under a state of emergency.

As dawn broke yesterday, hundreds of soldiers from choking assault rifles and riot shields advanced on Government House, and removed personnel carriers and other vehicles blocked off all access roads.

The military-led headquarters mounted six trucks to ease further warnings in chlorine to face the consequences.

Army spokesperson Lt. Gen. Sansern Kaewkamnerd said troops had also supported posters in Bangkok warning on Monday, during which demonstrators took control of a television station and a railway terminal.

Military hailed

Abhisit hailed the success of the military campaign to dislodge the protesters. He praised the efforts of security forces, saying they used "soft power" and "prevented as much damage as possible."

Most of Bangkok's newspapers, irrespective of their political leanings, hailed out at the government's action, although nothing them as "illegal" and "urban warfare."

Abhisit was under huge pressure to end the crisis quickly to prevent further damage to Thailand's international image, after years of unrest following the military coup that ousted Thaksin in 2006.

Several countries advised tourists not to travel to Thailand or to exercise caution if they are already there, while the US state department condemned the "unacceptable violence" by the protesters.

Bangkok's emergency services confirmed Tuesday that the toll from clashes between security forces, demonstrators and local residents stood at two dead and 113 wounded, 44 of whom were still in hospital. Abhisit said 27 troops were among the injured.

The public health ministry said the two fatalities were men from Bangkok who were shot during fighting with protesters on Sunday evening.

A nation divided

Abhisit has emerged stronger after successfully crushing the protests, but now faces the formidable task of uniting his divided nation, analysts said.

They said there is little hope of a long-term solution to Thailand's problems as long as it remains divided between Thaksin's mostly poor supporters and his foes in the power circles of the Palace, military and bureaucracy.

Abhisit must address the grievances of the protesters by, if is Thaksin. Beyond domestic politics, Thailand must restore its international reputation and reassert leadership in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), of which it is a key member and the current chair.

"It has strengthened Abhisit's hand in the immediate term. This was a big test for him," said political analyst Thitinan Pongsudhirak of Chulalongkorn University, while warning he could not afford to be complacent.

Thaksin threat still there

"It depends what lesson Abhisit takes away from this. If he takes victory as a vindication then he may face trouble down the road," he said.

"The movement of the Reds may have fizzled out for now but the sentiment behind it is still genuine and widespread," he said, referring to calls for social justice and a fairer share of the economic pie.

The collapse of the red movement has damaged Thaksin, who had been addressing his supporters during the protests and urging them to continue with their campaign-to-win struggle, but analysts said the threat he poses has not evaporated.

"I think that [protest] tactics have agreed to disperse to that they can fight another day," said Michael Montesano, a visiting academic at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Questions on legitimacy

The quick end to the protests is a major boost for Abhisit, and helps to quell rumors that the Army, which helped install him from office, but began to lose confidence in the young leader who has threatened to the top job.

But Joseph Liow, from the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore, said the premier must address questions over the legitimacy of his government—installed after a court decision ousted Thaksin's allies.

"He has to show decisions that he is in control. He has to be able to find a long-term sustainable solution," Liow said.

"That will entail opening up avenues of dialogue by finding capable mediators. It's not going to be easy but the onus is on him to search for such a solution."

Abhisit also needs to rebuild Thailand's international image, found by footage of troops firing shots in the air and protesters fighting back with gasoline bombs and by burning buses.

And it must restore its leadership to Asean after the humiliating scrapping of the 14th Asean Leaders Summit in the resort city of Pattaya that saw protesters rampaging into the venue and foreign ministers and heads of state evacuated from a hotel rooftop by helicopter.

Shanmugam said the Thai summit deserved credit for its handling of the protests and social-ing a bound bloodbath.

18 coups since 1932

He said the Army, which has played a crucial role in Thailand's four years of political instability and has mounted 18 coups since 1932, will continue "to be a partner in the Bangkok government."

Abhisit's task now is to heal deep divisions among the Thai people, brutally split between the Bangkok elite, who also support Thaksin, and the rural and urban poor who see him as their savior.

"His biggest challenge will be to cope with the deepened divide in Thai society. It need, to say," said Montesano. AFP and AP

Conspiracy theories hound Obama pet dog

From page A1

RUNNING CUTTING The first pet owned by the Obama girls lives up to the reputation of its breed—a Portuguese water dog—as highly energetic as the US president keeps every guests the pooch along the corridors of power.

dress might have been engineered to make it look like he was a mongrel dog—or at least like the line to fend off criticism that the Obamas had picked a purebred from a breeder.

So, is Bo a mongrel dog or not? Did 'Di President Barack Obama keep or break a campaign promise in picking the purebred as the family's new pet?

The twists and turns of the Portuguese water dog's route to the White House make for the kind of intrigue that political junkies and the highly opinionated dog world delight in.

'Quasi-rescue dog'

Obama and his wife Michelle said during the presidential campaign that they had promised their two girls a dog after the election.

The Obamas repeatedly said they wanted it to be a rescued dog such as one from a shelter. Their search was complicated by daughter Malia's allergies, which would rule out many of the "mutts" the president had said he would prefer.

Enter Bo, a 6-month-old puppy given up by his first owners and snatched with the Obamas through his breeder, because he was given up by his first owner as a puppy. It and he were with his second owners, the Obamas, but never spent time in a shelter or with a rescue group. He is a "quasi-rescue dog," according to Wayne Pacelle, chief executive of The Humane Society of the United States.

Kennedy connection

Here's where the intrigue comes in:

● Bo's founders happen to have local ties. Edward Kennedy's Portuguese water dogs. The Massachusetts senator, an Obama friend and political ally, also acquired a pup from Bo's litter. Bo's breeders say fans of Obama and assisted Bo's litter for Hope and Change litter.

● Bo's first owner lives in Washington.

● Bo was returned to the breeder in early March, during the spring timeline the Obamas had given for their dog adoption.

● Kennedy and his wife Victoria helped line Bo up with the Obamas. Before's meeting between White House, the pup spent nearly a month with the Kennedys' dog trainer in Virginia.

A gift

In fact, Bo was a gift to Obama's daughters. Media outlets, from the Associated, said Katie McCormick Lelyveld, spokesperson for Michelle Obama. The puppy officially arrived on Tuesday at the White House.

"They were meeting their search with shelter dogs, but when the Kennedys learned of this dog and offered it as a gift to the girls, they met the dog, it was a perfect fit for their lifestyle and for Malia's health concerns," Lelyveld said, adding that the Obamas made a donation to the Washington Humane Society. "Because this gift came before they prepared search sort of was complete, they made a gift to some of the places they were looking for."

The Humane Society's Pacelle acknowledged that the Obamas never formally promised to get a dog from a pound or rescue group.

The society had lined search for Obama or its website. "Thanks, Mr. President, for giving a rescued-rescue dog a forever home," it said.

Gray area

"He's in a gray area," Pacelle said of Bo. "But I still say that many animal advocates are disappointed that the Obamas didn't go to a shelter or breed rescue group, purely because he set that expectation and because so many activists are focused on trying to reduce the number of animals euthanized at shelters, and there's no better person to make the case to the American public that you can get a great dog from a shelter than the president."

The puppy later removed its congressional passage and replaced it with "First Dog Unveiled. Concerns about impact on shelters, demand for breed as the media has debut."

Dog whisperer gives tip

Cesar Millan, professional dog trainer and host of the National Geographic Channel's "The Dog Whisperer" said Bo could be considered rescued, since he was removed from a situation that wasn't working.

Millan, who refounded a nonprofit foundation to help abused dogs, also gave the tip: To help Bo settle in, the Obamas should walk him a lot in the early days to bond with him, share his energy and make him hungry for his meals.

That will give the dog a routine and help him see that the family is the source of his food, and he has a routine in her said.

"The dog doesn't know he just went from a mutt for pure. Dosh of Bo United States. The dog is going to say, 'Who fulfilled my needs from day one, so who should I trust from this one?'" Millan said.

Bon-Bo's 1st love to Kennedy

Bo's breeder, Bitsi Bea Ann of Boyd, Texas, said she didn't consider Bo a rescued dog. Owners of dogs from the kennel she and her husband run must sign contracts requiring them to return the dogs to the rescue if they do not work out, she said. Bo went from his first home, in Washington, to the Kennedys' trainer in Virginia, and now to the White House, she said.

Portuguese water dogs aren't for everyone, according to Bitsi. Known as PWDs they tend to be high-energy "in-your-face" dogs that need a lot of attention, and their curly coats require a lot of maintenance.

Bitsi said the first family did a lot of research and already knew the breed's pros and cons, and that Malia Kennedy was closely involved. Bo seemed like a good fit because the Obamas are active families and have the resources to give him the training and other things he would need, she added.

"I wouldn't say he's emotionally high in energy," Bitsi said, but still a "little bit more than middle-of-the-road."

"On a scale of five, he's probably about three," she added.

Mouthwatering, scattered

The dog's mouthwatering coat aside him a good choice, given Malia Obama's allergies.

Bitsi also expressed concern that puppy mills would try to capitalize on the Obamas' dog choice and start churning out PWDs in an eager pursuit for the responsibility of good Portuguese water dog breeders to try to prevent that, she said.

As for Bo, he has already been neutered, Michelle Obama's spokesperson said. AP

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The 2009 Commencement Rites, Elementary and High School Department, UE Caloocan

March 31, 2009, 2:00 p.m.
UE Caloocan Field, 156 Samson Road, Caloocan City

Commencement Speaker:
Dr. ARNEL S. DIOKNO-HIZ
Member, Board of Examiners, Ilocos Philippines
Attending Physician, Rodriguez Memorial Hospital

The 2009 Commencement Rites, Elementary and Secondary Laboratory Schools, UE Manila

April 2, 2009, 2:00 p.m.
UE Theatre, C.M. Recto Avenue, Manila

Commencement Speaker:
Mr. SHARON T. TAN
President and General Manager, MEID Technology Institute

The Conferment of the Degree Doctor of Laws, Honoris Causa, upon Justice Dante O. Tinga and the 61st Yearend Commencement Rites, UE Manila

April 15, 2009, 9:00 a.m.
Plenary Hall, PICC, Pasay City

Commencement Speaker:
Justice DANTE O. TINGA
(UE Associate in Arts, 1959, with High Honors; UE LLB 1963; Magna Cum Laude & Valedictorian) Associate Justice, Supreme Court of the Republic of the Philippines and One of UE's 60 Most Outstanding Alumni

The 31st Yearend Commencement Rites, UE Caloocan

April 15, 2009, 2:00 p.m.
Plenary Hall, PICC, Pasay City

Commencement Speaker:
Dr. JOSE C. DENCIO, CO
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Vice President, Philippine Assessment and Training Corporation (PHILCOR), Corporate Office
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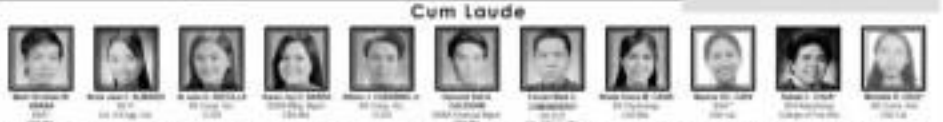

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Across the NATION

Search is on for Panlilio successor

Close ally says engine for Pampanga reforms should be kept running

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—WHETHER GOV. EDDIE Panlilio would run for a national position or return to the priesthood, civic and business leaders have begun searching for his successor to keep the engine for reforms in the province running.

Mayor Oscar Rodriguez, a staunch ally of Panlilio, revealed this on Monday but said the search was "informal."

He said leaders of various sectors had approached him for his views on the local political situation or urge him to run for governor.

The search took off in the names of Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid, Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo and Lubao Mayor Dennis Pineda have been floated as possible gubernatorial candidates next year.

Lapid was governor from 1998 to 2001, but was suspended twice as a result of a plunder charge filed by Cielo Menorgand, former vice governor and half sister of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Lapid was later cleared of the charges.

Juan Miguel, or Mikee, is eldest son of Mrs. Arroyo. Pineda is son of suspected jueteng lord Rodolfo "Boyet" Pineda and also an ally of the President.

"In their appraisal, and which I agreed with, there will really be a vacuum left if Among Ed (Panlilio) goes. By their reckoning, I can fill it up," Rodriguez said.

"It will be a cold order for educators will take over after Among Ed. He has put in a lot of reforms. He increased quarry collections. There is no GOE (Certified Operating Procedure)," a euphemism for grease money in public officials in exchange for government projects. He's a self-meaning, self-motivated and still a principled man," he said.

Panlilio said the search for his successor was a "natural thing that will happen soon. I've given the signal that I will go back to the priesthood as an aid for a national position."

He earlier said he will not run for re-election if a strong candidate would emerge to continue his reforms.

"I want to be part of the search. I cannot just leave Pampanga this way out of consideration and concern. I did a leap of faith in 2007 and I don't see my priesthood," he said.

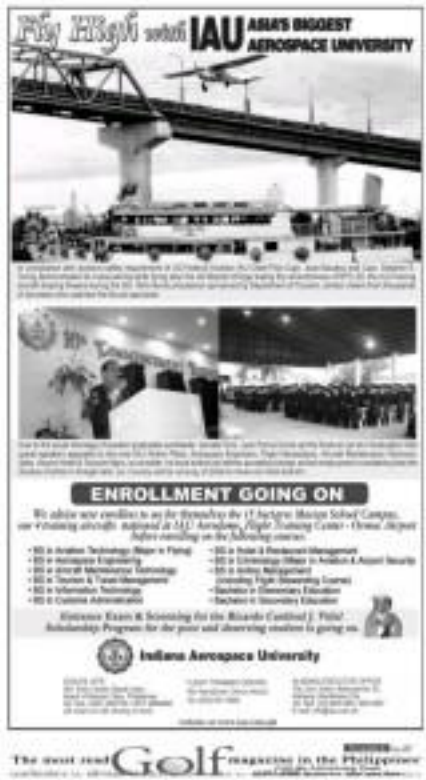
Panlilio urged Kapampangans to participate in the search and help campaign for the best candidate.

Rodriguez, a lawyer and former Pampanga representative, said he has not yet made up his mind about running for governor, preferring to seek a third and last term as mayor of this city town next year.

"Only the general consent will compel me to run. I told them, I'm not totally closed to the idea of running for governor," he said.

Rodriguez has worked in the judiciary and has served as lawmaker, provincial administrator and vice-mayor.

He was chief of the House justice committee that endorsed the impeachment complaint against then President Joseph Estrada in 2000. He later served as one of the prosecutors in the impeachment trial. Beverly Rivera, Inquirer Central Luzon



CENTURION FESTIVAL

Fast becoming a tourist attraction, the Centurion Festival in Pinamalayan, Oriental Mindoro, has evolved into an annual contest for residents and other participants from nearby municipalities to showcase their creativity. Jess C. Mendoza

The most read Golf magazine in the Philippines

Firm pays back town ruined by '06 oil spill

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

BOAC CITY—GUIMARAS RESIDents will benefit from some P2.9 million in grants that the 101 government unit is giving to those who lost their livelihood as a result of an oil spill in 2006.

City Precaution and Peace Preservation unit) finance the second phase of a municipal-care livelihood program for people in Nueva Valencia in Guimaras. The town was the worst hit among the island's five municipalities when oil spilled from the tankers MT Solar 1 southwest of the island on Aug. 11, 2006.

The cargo ship, chartered by Petron Corp., sank while transporting bunker fuel oil from Singapore to Zamboanga, losing more than 2.1 million liters.

Thousands of residents, mostly fishermen, were affected.

Mariculture farm

CEO Philippines country director Jaime Tadeo turned over a P50,000 check to Petron president Eric Recto in ceremonies at the Petron office in Manila on March 24.

"Translating this mariculture farm in Guimaras to partnership with Cit Philippines underscores our desire to provide a viable, long-term livelihood assistance that will diversify beneficiaries' fishing in the province," Recto said in a press statement.

"It will provide a more reliable source of income for them while preserving the environment."

The Aeoponic Foundation, under the Ugnay Guimaras program, and the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center's Aquaculture Department (Seafdec/AQD), launched the pilot phase of the mariculture farm at the Seafdec station in Nueva Valencia in July 2007.

Training

Thirty fishermen completed training on milkfish cage culture and are now engaged in growing some 72,000 milkfish (bangus).

At the end of the pilot program, the residents harvested over 26,000 kilograms of bangus and earned nearly P2.5 million in gross sales, according to the press statement.

Second phase

The second phase aims to replicate the milkfish cage culture in four other villages in Nueva Valencia and increase the number of beneficiaries.

During the ceremony, Recto presented certificates to the Department of Education in Guimaras, which would be given to those who would complete training in computer technology.

Petron is providing four-year scholarship to all of the province's 17 public high schools.

Eastern Visayas vets to get pay soon

TACLOBAN CITY—Veterans of World War II in Eastern Visayas are likely to receive their outstanding pensions from the US government this week, according to the regional Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO).

Nicasia Bead, head of the PVAO regional field operation office, said the agency's central office in Manila informed her on Monday of the possible money release as adopted by the US Department of Veterans' Affairs.

At least 1,000 veterans from the region applied for the compensation package, but 328 applications remained only 781 processed. Each veteran will receive $15,000 if they are US citizens and $9,000 if they are not.

If a veteran, whose application was approved by the US government, died before receiving the compensation, the spouse will receive the money, Bead said. Joey A. Gallofin, Inquirer Visayas

INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Country's first native title turns 100

By Vincent Cabreza
Baguio City

THE COUNTRY'S FIRST NATIVE title, which inspired the enactment of the indigenous peoples' rights law in 1997, turned 100 years old in February.

The US Supreme Court recognized the Baguio properties of Ibaloi datu Antero Carlos in its 1909 ruling, although his heirs said they never benefited directly from the native title over what is now Camp John Hay.

This ruling has been used extensively to assert indigenous peoples' rights in recent legal issues.

Despite its influence on jurisprudence, this landmark ruling is hardly remembered by Baguio City, which is also celebrating its centennial this year, or by indigenous Filipinos.

INDIGENOUS groups in the Cordillera and in other parts of the country benefit from the Carlos Doctrine that has turned 100 years old this year. The ruling, which recognizes the native title, has been used to assert indigenous Filipinos' rights to their property. (ALDEN)

DATU Don Antero Mateo Carlos

Relevance

But an American couple has provided relevance to the so-called doctrine of the native Title.

Lenora and Julia Bill of the Western Shoshone tribe in Nevada have been rousing the country in drum support for a growing indigenous peoples' alliance.

They visited Davao and parts of Luzon recently to discuss how indigenous Filipinos and their tribal land-claims experiences of harassment from the American government.

Like what happened to Baguio's Ibaloi people, the US government confiscated Shoshone lands in 1872.

A documentary film called 'American Outrage' notes how the American federal government used the 1823 Doctrine of Christian Discovery to justify breaking its 1872 treaty with the Shoshone so it could get the lands of Shoshone miners Carter and Mary Dann in the 1990s.

Julia Bill said the Doctrine of Christian Discovery set the legal precedent for Western governments to confiscate aboriginal lands in their colonizing pursuits, even when the lands were inhabited. It is outdated in modern US jurisprudence, she said.

She said yesterday, advocate Geoffrey Stevenson directed her to the Carlos Doctrine, which would be one of a few American legal decisions that reversed the Christian Discovery Doctrine.

"I am studying [the Carlos ruling] because we really need this for our defense," said Bill, who works for the Western Shoshone Defense Project.

She said the Christian Discovery Doctrine could hence also have impacted on the Philippines when it was still a US colony.

Carlos may be the most recognized indigenous Filipino in the land, next to Kalinga chieftain Macliing Dulag, who was murdered for opposing a hydroelectric dam project in the Cordillera's Chico River.

Ipra ruling

Chief Justice Reynato Puno relied on the Carlos Doctrine when he voted, as then Supreme Court associate justice in 2000, to uphold the constitutionality of Republic Act No. 8371 (Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act or Ipra).

The law was enacted in 1998, and the court consequently ruled that it had not violated the 1987 Constitution.

In an opinion he penned in 2000, Puno said: "The Carlos decision largely rested on the Irish American constitutionalist's conception of 'due process,' as well as the government policy to do justice to the natives."

"It was based on the treaty mandate entrusted to the islands via the Philippine Bill of 1902 that 'he [or she] be entitled in said islands which shall deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law, or deny to any person therein the equal protection of the laws," he said.

Citing US Chief Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes's decision, Puno said: "The acquisition of the Philippines was not like the settlement of the white race in the United States. Whatever consideration may have been shown to the North American Indians, the dominant purpose of the whites in America was to occupy land.

"It is obvious that, however stated, the conquest of our ruling over the Philippines was different. No one can suppose, could deny that, as far as consistent with paramount necessities, our first object in the internal administration of the islands is to do justice to the natives, not to exploit their country for private gain."

Jeanna Carlito, Mateo's great granddaughter, discussed the Carlos Doctrine in a paper she read for the Baguio Centennial Conference of the University of the Philippines Baguio recently.

"Mateo ... died on June 6, 1908, before the final decision of the US Supreme Court [was released] ... The case his wife lost [certificate Number 2 was issued Lizonia] in the name of [Mateo's American executors] Messrs Clarke, John H. Hausenwinkle and Charles C. Cohn for the area now known as Camp John Hay," she said.

Treaty waiver

"On Monday, Mateo cooperation with the American lawyers [was] another case of making waiver of indigenous peoples in dealing with American carpetbaggers," she said.

Months after the decision was released, the American colonial government approved the charter of Baguio in August 1909 which, she said, "institutionalized land grabbing and systematic dispossession of the original Ibaloi settlements from their ancestral lands in Kabayan (the grandstock that becomes Baguio)."

"While Mateo Carlos may have won the case for native title, [it] was a paper victory. It did not forestall the continuous confiscation and expropriation of Ibaloi lands for various purposes throughout the city's history," she said.

SPORTS
Editor Tedoro A. Fernandez • Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Ochoa

Texters test Realtors; Kings hire Humphrey

By Mycaylo R. Cordis

GHOST RIDERS MADE IT NO SECRET THAT he wanted some quality time with his Talk 'N' Text crew to whip them into the right shape for the second half of their Metroplex PBA Philippine Cup elimination round schedule.

Reyes gets to find out whether a two-week layoff was enough preparation as his charges, spearheaded by Jimmy Alapag, Jayson Castro and Harry Lee, take on the Alaska Aces in the Araneta Coliseum.

"We've never really had the time to get in shape like this (reassessment)," Reyes told reporters after a 124-103 win over Alaska on March 27 that put his Texters to 3-3 before the Holy Week lull. "To tell you frankly, I think we're actually lucky to be 3-3.

"The break will be a welcome one for us, because we had just five days of practice before starting your campaign in this tournament," added Reyes. "We can't turn the chance to have some rest down."

Meanwhile, defending champion Barangay Ginebra has enlisted the services of National Basketball Association veteran Sean Humphrey to take the place of Fred Meeks, listed as 6-foot-6, Humphrey can settle for the power with the Los Angeles Clippers in the 2006-2007 season, where he averaged 1.8 points and one board in five seasons.

Gunther is also eyeing the return of gunslinger Mark Caguioa in the first week of May. The high-scoring guard hasn't suited up for the Kings this season because of knee injuries.

The reigning Philippine Cup champion Texters still found time of the six-game layoff on paper but have had a roller-coaster ride here. And Talk N' Text coach Jimmy Alapag is counting on that to learn against the Aces in their 5 p.m. clash.

But Lucio has a 5-2 card and will be coming into the game the winner of its last two outings, the last a 109-100 heartbreaking of Barangay Ginebra in a share of third place and the Tropang Texters looking to win back-to-back games for the second time.

FOND Jesus of Magnolia tries to free himself from the right guarding of Pharex's Alfred Jaworski Jr.

Brand new name, same old form

Oracle Titans trim Hair Doctors

By Jasmine W. Payo

HARBOUR CENTRE'S REINCARNATION may sport a new name, but it looked a familiar story here.

The Titans, formerly the Batang Pier leaders every bit as dominant in hammering out a 75-54 triumph over the Lovable Hair Doctors at the start of the PBL-PG Pilot Landmaster Cup yesterday at the San Juan Gym.

Mark Barroca, last conference's Finals MVP, fired 13 points to help Oracle take its bid for a second straight title off to a strong start.

Magnolia Purevite debuted with a victory, an 80-75 decision over Pharex in the first game.

John Abalos knocked in 20 points, including a key triple that pushed the Thrusters ahead, 56-55, with 10:56 left after the Gerick tallied from a 14-point deficit to the score at 73-72.

Magnolia veteran Mel Belmonte also delivered a pair of buffer baskets in the final two minutes to finish with 19 points on top of 11 rebounds and three blocks.

"Every game counts and I reminded the boys that this is a short league," said Magnolia coach Siot Tanael.

Oliver Caguioa debuted with a victory just weeks after taking over coach Jorge Gallent, who entered Harbour Center as an assistant, drafted its commander-in-chief.

"I'm happy the boys adjusted to my system in a span of two weeks," said Caguioa. "There's pressure, but at the same time I feel excited. I have everything to learn and working to gain, but I take it as a challenge."

The scores:

First Game

ORACLE (L.A. 42)— Barroca 13, Salmon 10, Alonzo 10, Arellano 9, Ilagan 5, Ramos 4, Mangahas 3, Ayaay 2, Valdez 2, Mabasa 2, Magsaysay 2, Dela 1, Taylor 0, Tiongson 0, Lumanlan 0.

PHAREX (Pe—Garth 23, Abalos 20, Ayaay 10, Aguilar 8, Dionisio 6, Ilustre 5, Lo 4, Dalmasalo 2, Rivero 2, Galanza 0, Santos 0, Albert 0, Asuncion 0).

Quarters: 18-20, 40-38, 58-58, 80-75

Second Game

ORACLE (26)— Barroca 17, Mahinay 10, Alonzo 9, Dela Cruz 8, Arellano 7, Ramos 6, Salmon 5, Mangahas 4, Ayaay 3, Valdez 2, Tiongson 0, Lumanlan 0, Taylor 0, Mabasa 0, Magsaysay 0.

LEGEND (Ba—Gray 15, Tan 14, Vanlandingham 6, Asinsky 7, To 5, Magsaluz 5, Diaz 2, Sison 2, Cervantes 7, Ruiz 3, Lagunzad 5, Buenaventura 0, Manuel 0, Pambid 0).

Quarters: 20-10, 43-28, 68-43, 75-54

Trainer: Pacman ready to rumble

By Bay Lauco

THE EAGLE HIMSELF INQUIRER is ready to couple with Pinky Hatton.

Filipino trainer Rolly Fernandez made this observation Sunday, three weeks before the boxing hero goes for Hatton's International Boxing Organization junior welterweight crown on May 2 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

"Mr. Dreamer's body is 100 percent conditioned already," Fernandez told an evening newscast in Filipino on Monitor. "He just needs to maintain his usual work and movements so that he'll be 100 percent focused on fight night."

Nevertheless, after a six-fight quarrel between friend, a smoking training gun Freddie Roach, former world champion Michael Moorer and conditioning expert Alex Ariza in whipping the world's best pound-for-pound fighter into tiptop shape at the MGM Grand Gym in Hollywood.

In an earlier report, Ariza, who supervises Pacquiao's early morning roadwork and strengthening exercises, disclosed that Pacquiao's weight hovers around 149 lbs., just enough to off the limit.

Hatton, on the other hand, reportedly weighs 153 units as diet restrictions as his training camp headed by Floyd Mayweather Sr.

Team Pacquiao is expected to move out to the Sin City and begin official training at the MGM Grand this week before the fight that guarantees the protagonists at least $12 million, excluding pay per view sales.

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IT'S ALL uptown go for the Shakey's V-League with (from left) commissioner Tony Boy Liao, Shakey's marketing manager Bartley Dwaine, Ateneo's Groreham Ho, Shakey's general manager Vic Gregorio, Lady Eagle Chara Soriano, Sports Vision chair Maying Hernandez and V-League operations director Nebo Petro praising the tournament launch at the PSA Forum. RAJ NISPEROS

UST, Adamson highlight Shakey's V-League start

By Mark Vincent Olanga, Contributor

FOUR POWERHOUSE SQUADS HIGHLIGHT the start of the sixth season of the Shakey's V-League, which opens Sunday at the Philsports Arena (Filoil) in Pasig.

"This year it's all about bringing it to the next level," added Mamaclay.

Three-time champion University of Santo Tomas, defending champion Adamson, reigning second conference champion San Sebastian and Ateneo kick off hostilities in an exciting round-robin tournament.

The Lady Eagles battle the Lady Tigresses at 2 p.m., followed by the Tigresses-Lady Bulldogs clash at 4 p.m. The University of the Philippines pro squad will premiere during the opening day.

Other participating teams are Far Eastern University, Ateneo, College of St. Benilde and rookie squad UP.

Ateneo's Chara Soriano, who has stood up for playing years and will be one of two Lady Eagles jersey players this time, said they are ready for the new season.

"We're going to do better this season, that's what I can promise you," said former all-Ateneo squad rookie played second to Adamson in the 2008 first conference.

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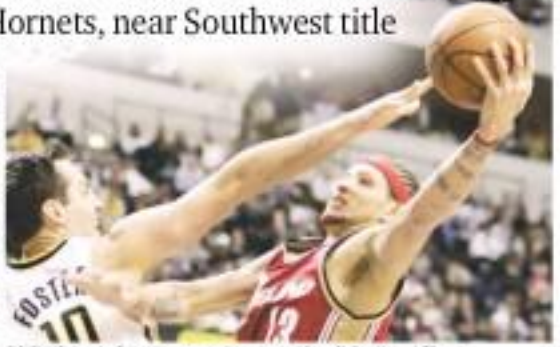
Cavs nail home court edge

Rockets rip Hornets, near Southwest title



CLEVELAND playmaker Delonte West goes up to shoot against the defense of Indiana big man Jeff Foster

INDIANAPOLIS—THE CLEVELAND Cavaliers, for NBA best home team, clinched the home-court advantage throughout the playoffs with a 117-109 trashing of the Indiana Pacers on Monday.

LeBron James scored 37 points to lead the Cavaliers, who won their 58th tonight.

"It's a big step, however it's a big step," James said. "When you consider all the great teams, all the great players, all the great coaches and all the great systems that are in the NBA, for us to finish with the best record is a tremendous feat. And that is something the franchise should be proud of."

The Cavaliers currently own a 30-1 home record and can tie the 1985-86 Boston Celtics' NBA home record of 40-1 by winning their regular-season finale against New Orleans Hornets.

"We've got to do what's best for the ring," James said. "We've got home-court advantage already. We're not fighting for bragging a record anymore. We're fighting for that ring."

In Houston, the Rockets moved within seven wins of the NBA's Southwest Division title with an 88-80 win over the New Orleans Hornets.

Yao Ming scored 22 points to lead the way for Houston.

If the Rockets win their regular-season finale in Dallas on Wednesday, they'll secure their first division championship in 15 years. But in the tight Western Conference, Houston could still slip to fifth place—and lose home-court advantage in the first round—with a loss in the Mavericks. AP

(COMPILED FROM REPORTS) (Scored 97 Indiana 109, Houston 88, New Orleans 80)

Big League softball: Illam squad clips Rizal

By Cristel P. Tapas

ERICA ABELLO AND ALEX ZULUAGA struck out home runs in the sixth inning to power host national Little League association of Orlando Illam to a 2-1 slapping of southside suburban Rizal yesterday in the Big League softball tournament of the 2009 Philippine Series of the Rizal Municipal over softballers.

Both sides threw a duel with no home runners pitcher Erica Fernando and Jenny Pangilinan, who continued for a one-hitter as the squad bounced back from a 3-0 loss to Laguna, Monday.

Fernando and Pangilinan were members of the Town Manila squad that rolled for a perfect-set finish in the 2008 Big League Softball home in Bulacan, Mexico.

Orlando moved to a tie for second with its victim at 2-1. Laguna took the temporary lead after scoring its second run in as many outings at the expense of Caloocan, 3-1, to enter tonight.

Adrian Bautista belted a two-run homer at the top of the eighth to shatter the tie and power Laguna, which also ran after bought last night's win at 2-1 to 1-2.

"The tournament is very tight," said Illam coach Ian Santiago. "It seems like every day is a championship."

But the team could not be One said in the Senior League softball tournament where Rizal, Mich is dominating the opposition.

The Rizal Capitol, which lost unanimous swing member Ma Gold Stadium, scattered Antipolo, 24-6, for Date Rizal outright victory.

Aside Pangilinan struck out 11 batters and hit down batsmen, including a three-run shot that fueled a 15-run things right in the first inning.

Valenzuela City chess bets shine

VALENZUELA CITY—VALENZUELA CITY POSTED back-to-back victories and surged to the top of the 2009 National Inter-Cities and Illocos qualifier chess team championship being held here.

Wife Cebi Mark Pangan hotting up a record against Mine CBA Olympic Light and Magallo Antonio Jr., Valenzuela City scored six victories by 3½ Villanueva and Silverio Manalo to topple Isla Tagaytay City, 3.5-2.5, in the fifth round and

By Top Choice
At Santa Ana Park

Nepomuceno to receive award, leads TBAM tilt

BOWLER LEGEND RAFAEL "Paeng" Nepomuceno is off to England today to receive an award from the World Bowling Writers and bid for a seventh world title in the World Trophy Masters.

Nepomuceno, 52, will receive the Eliot Gaby Jr. Distinguished Service award from the WBWA as announcement announcers of tenpin bowling journalists.

The Filipino thus becomes the first bowler in history to get all major awards given by the WBWA after he was named Bowler of the Year in 1984, 1985 and 1992 and became the first male inductee of the WBWA Hall of Fame in 1993.

The Distinguished Service Award will be handed to Nepomuceno at the start of the three-day World Trophy Masters at the Metrodome in Barnsley on April 17.

Meanwhile, Nepomuceno led the Open division qualifying after Day 2 of the 2006 TBAM Bayou Excite Open here.

A member of Team Pinas, Nepomuceno rolled a series of 1356 to lead the Men's Open division qualifying. Max Verse follows with 1294. — Romulo S. Aurelio

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SOUTH LUZON LEG
NORTH LUZON LEG

Viloria has tougher task

IN HUDDLE

Herb Cebi

THERE ARE ONLY FOUR DAYS to go before the much-awaited double-header between the flyweight champion Ramon Gonzalez to avail undefeated challenger Joud "Cabo" Mercante and treat the "Sinulan Touch" Viloria versus IBF light flyweight champion Ulises Solis in Mexico.

As of Monday, April 13, the care of the boxing event suggest The Finis and the Fathers was complete. The Cebu introvert defender also what he said from the last fight for his improvement in all his 27 years. Mercante, how Gone to bring down that dynamo, Viloria, all the way to Manila, where he got a reserve but welcome. Upon this.

While a step also be very warm in Texas, veteran boxing writer Dennis Hamlin noted that Mercante is set for a difficult fight adjusting to the overdrive time accumulated here.

One of the scribe said he was in the Manila Hotel last Monday morning when Mercante took off to jog at the Rizal Park.

The scribe said Mercante was sweating more than when jogging pants and watching long skirted jacket. He started sweating with the hot mind. 33 a.m.

He wonder he gave up after a few minutes.

Yesterday morning, still undaunted by the unfriendly Philippine weather, Mercante decided to go at the Punch Out gym in Makati for the open workout with media.

Mercante was already sweating even before he entered his workout at the seven-foot gym. He was sweating profusely after a few minutes of shadowboxing and skipping rope.

Few minutes of skipping rope, and shadowboxing.

As Mercante was having his hand bandaged, I took the opportunity to confer with my colleagues.

They agreed that between Donaire and Viloria who had been smoked out in the same gym earlier, Brito had the tougher assignment.

Reason: Brito beat Ulises Solis who has already defeated three Filipinos in succession. He knocked out Rodel Mayol in the eighth round, TKO'd Rex Kamingking in the ninth and won over Nonito's older brother Glenn Donaire by unanimous decision.

Although coming off a third-round knockout victory over Brad Mathis in Vallejo, the style stands on Filipinos by John makes him the man to beat. Eric agreed.

On the other hand, Donaire is heavily favored to win over Montenes.

The writers agreed that Donaire has the edge in speed and power, a much better opponent than Montenes entered his last defense in Reno.

Donaire said Montenes had already squared off in the ring in amateur bouts during the US Olympic trials for the 2000 Sydney and Olympics. Donaire prevailed over Montenes.

Brito, either complacent or afraid to show his wrath, chipped the open workout.

Carrera spearheads trade team to international races

By Cedelff Tapay

SHERWIN CARRERA, THE PAGCOR-Amore rider who has been making more waves overseas than in the local circuit, spearheads a formidable amateur lineup to Southeast Asian Championship Season (Philippine trade team that will see action in two international races in the next two weeks.

The squad that also includes veterans Renato Sambrano, Erickson Ebon, Emelito Atilano and young guns Josh Valenzuela and Reiner Classic ride in the Adolph Shikiyain 2009 meeting April 19.

Carrera won one stage in the 2008 Speedy Tour d' Indonesia last year to lay Jaeyaquen' third place finish overall, while Classic, who finished second behind to the Regasio Handita racer, is hoping to fill the void left by Mercedes Ramos and Arnel Quecnisi who are skipping the international races in favor of the Tour of Luzon. (See related story below.)

Team manager Bic Rodriguez yesterday said the team is targeting a top five finish in the eight-stage Shikiyain that is classified as a 2.2 men's elite race by the International Cycling Union.

The team faces a tough field led by squads from the Middle East and the United States, said Rodriguez during the PSC forum on the UN Hadley's Avenue branch in Manila.

TOUR OF LUZON

Ramos rules 2nd stage, takes lead

By Jose Navarro

TAGAYTAY CITY—WITH JUST A FEW KILOMETERS OF UNSEALING road ahead, it never occurred to Mercedes Ramos that victory was imminent.

Ramos furiously forked away to the last five kilometers and left his closest challenger far behind for a solo finish in the second stage of the Lipulgas LPGMA Tour of Luzon.

The Antipenan from Tarlac City clocked four hours, eight minutes and 11 seconds from Lucena to this cool city famous for its picturesque view of the Taal volcano after pulling away from a pack of 62 stage-hungry riders in the 129-kilometer race.

Apart from claiming the Burlington stage honors, Ramos also grabbed the overall lead of the race. He will don the yellow jersey today on the way to Sherkhan City, a 164.3-kilometer drive marked by three mountainous ascents in Rizal, Batangas, Laguna, Mabitac and Siniloan, Rizal.

The Sky Phenon team captain surged ahead after he cut loose from a group of eight cyclists, which included Joseph Millanes and Dante Cagas of 7-Eleven Road Bike, Gerald Jones (The Sherwin dapper Darwin Atienza, Lloyd Hermann of American Vinyl and Mobile Wonders captain Sonny Insaidoo.

"They all looked tired and groggy so I grabbed the chance and pulled away," said the 29-year-old Ramos in Filipino.

Cris Jovers of Lipulgas stubbornly gave chase with approximately eleven (five) meters separating him from Ramos but lost steam four kilometers to the finish.

Jovers arrived with Millanes and Insaidoo in 4:00:01 while the third group of Bienvenido Reynoso, Cagas and Benjie Tagaytay Wilson Marcelino came in at 4:05:01.

"Even though I was way ahead in the last four kilometers, I still had doubts that I could win the race," said Ramos, who earned the distinction of becoming the first Filipino cyclist to secure the yellow jersey in the challenging Tour de Langkawi back in 2004.

"I just kept on pushing until I saw the finish line," he added.

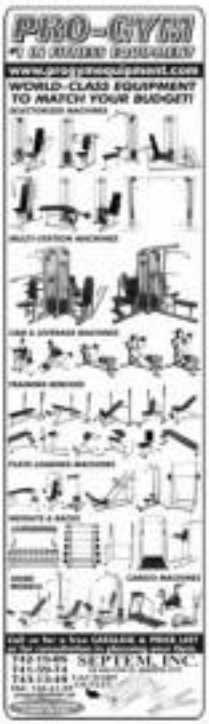
Stage One winner Teresa Martinez belonged in a group that pared the 99-rider field before the contingent got entangled in a traffic jam in Batam, Batangas, 79 kilometers into the race.

Martinez the peloton finally managed to elude the logistical mess after 25 minutes, it broke into splinters that left Martinez and a large group of riders behind.

Martinez finished 13th in the stage (4:13:24) along with a cluster of nine cyclists, including close friend Joel Calderon, who captured runner-up honors in Lucena.

Martinez now sits as eighth place in the overall standings.

RAMOS: Yellow jersey



Technology narrows the gap

IF YOU HAD ASKED ANY KNOWLEDGEABLE person in golf—including myself—to choose ten people who could win this year's Masters, I'm sure none would have chosen any of the three who figured in the sudden death play-off on the first hole.

Yes, but at 100-to-1 weight Angel Cabrera, an ever-aged Kenny Perry and a very unassuming Chad Campbell.

* * *

Angel Cabrera's triumph in the Masters over Kenny Perry was something to remember. It will be Our talk of the golfing town in the weeks, months and even the next few years to come.

The classic play by golfers off to racing gas on the first sudden-death hole—after hitting a tree in trying to go for the green from the pines, or than wedge shot where he headed his approach shrubs on first (to par to make it in the second play-off hole—will be featured in the Masters' history as one of the best memory shots.

It even had Perry applauding when Cabrera sank the putt to tie.

He showed a lot of resiliency when he plunked along despite the odds, especially when he received two crucial one-stroke breaks in the final two holes. It was a triumph of the human spirit, which would make that Masters the Major of the year.

Perry, too, will forever be remembered, not only for blowing that two-shot lead after a magnificent eight-iron from the tee of the 18th hole, but for the way he blew it which proved that even the poor of world class caliber are human and capable of mistakes.

The Kentucky native was looking to break a record which many view was unreachable: becoming the oldest Major champion at over 49 years old. Playing world class golf at that level can easily be taxing.

Jack Nicklaus won his 18th major in 1986 at Augusta. He was 46 years old when he pulled it off. This day and age doesn't give one many "oldies" golfers that many chances of winning, much less a Major, and Perry let one slip out of his hands.

And the sad part of it all is that the chance may never come again.

It was his best chance at a win, and in the end, it was his own undoing, as in, a one-way sea.

* * *

Perry's imperfect swing, which he played to utmost perfection for 70 holes, gave way on the most unfortunate moment to fault.

I have always preached on how imperfect swings fundamentals are in the game of golf. Because it is these fundamentals which you have to recall in the most crying times, as in Perry's case, in the final two holes.

What Perry did until those fateful two holes was commendable, to say the least. He was hitting it so far in the longest fairways could off the tee and he was putting with such smoothness that it looked like he could hole every putt he took.

His first undoing came on a poorly-played chip shot from the top of the 17th green, a shot which he clearly misjudged and fluffed. Having that single hit would-be that nerves had started to creep in.

Perry then completely left apart in his approach on No. 18, the second playoff hole, when he missed the green by what seemed to be 30-40 yards to the left.

Perry has won numerous titles on the Tour, and I'm sure that he would be willing to trade all of them for another shot at the final two holes as he succumbed a dream and say that he beat the best.

* * *

Making up that morning was until worth it, for not only did we see how Cabrera walked his way to victory, we also saw a monumental match-up between the top two golfers in the world in Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson.

That pairing proved to be even bigger than the Road Rights. Tiger and Phil dressed how a rue almost the rest they can, and even in a two-foot tie-maker in the closing holes, the duo almost pulled it off.

Even with Cabrera now wearing a green jacket, the sweet money for the next Masters this year would be on Mickelson and Woods.

The way they turned on their respective games on Sunday clearly told of how far ahead their games are. It was just an their tournaments to win, it was Cabrera's destiny to become the newest member of Augusta's champions' circle.

But all things being equal, Phil and the rest again grovelling Tiger will shoot into the rest of the year—and perhaps even the five to follow.

* * *

The advancement of technology has played a major role in today's golf game. The balls are better and the clubs allow you to hit longer and straighter because of their longer center spots.

But in my opinion the biggest improvement is the putter. Just by looking at the putter Cabrera used in the tournament, I could tell that it was perfect for him—at least he that week. They are even making putters very well balanced and made to fit all types of players, from the strokes to the jabbers.

Those new putters also come in all shapes, sizes and weights, from long to belly to very short ones. All in all, this has managed to narrow the gap between the top ten players and the rest forty. And for the ordinary golfer like you and me, the challenge is to "borrow or find one that fits us to a round's, or at least a year.

Send comments to sports@inquirer.com.ph

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Aplus METRO
Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

DID YOU KNOW

ACROSS the Rizal Monument at Rizal Park is the marker for Kilometer Zero, the starting point of the road mapping system in the Philippines.

Cyrill Jurabeck, Inquirer Research

Rodriguez in standoff

Cuerpo won't yield post to acting mayor

By Dj Yap and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

WILL THE REAL MAYOR of Rodriguez (Rizal) please stand up?

The dispute in the town hall of Rodriguez, Rizal, continued to simmer yesterday as both suspended Mayor Pedro Cuerpo and newly sworn-in acting Mayor Oriz each ordered a clean-up on the mayor's chair.

Cruz said he would ask the Department of Interior and Local Government to implement the suspension order on Cuerpo by removing him from his office, where he has holed up in protest since Sunday evening.

But Cuerpo insisted that he was still the mayor and vowed to mount a counteraction to this effort to oust the department heads in the town hall.

Cruz said lieutenants in the town hall were being disrupted by Cuerpo's refusal to heed the order from the Malacañang-appointed him for 90 days based on graft charges filed against him by a group of ex-officio officials.

The order was served on Cuerpo by the DILG on Monday.

Cruz added that he had tried to call a meeting with the town's department heads on Monday but none showed up after Cuerpo purportedly issued the same order to not call the meeting.

"They are being pressured by suspended Mayor Cuerpo," Cruz said, adding that he would try to call another meeting later, along with local DILG officials, to explain that he was now the acting mayor, and functionary.

ROBINSON L. SOL

Today is last day for filing tax returns, says BIR

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL Revenue yesterday clarified that today is the last day for the filing of income tax returns (ITRs).

"An extension of the April 15, 2000 deadline for the filing of ITRs is not forthcoming. Taxpayers have only until today to file their tax returns," Anlin E. Bautista, officer in charge and assistant commissioner of the BIR Taxpayer Assistance Service, said in a statement.

She issued the clarification following a report that the last day for the filing of ITRs is on April 20.

Bautista said taxpayers who fail to meet the deadline would be penalized.

"It would give us no choice but to impose forewarnate, in the form of surcharge, interest and compromise penalty on the basic tax due," she added.

She said taxpayers may go to the nearest BIR assistance center or call the bureau's contact center at 981-0000 for more information. They can also log on to www.bir.gov.ph.

Nancy C. Gonzalez

San Mateo folk demand closure of new landfill

By Alvain Pagsa

RESIDENTS OF SAN MATEO, Rizal, and environmentalists yesterday held a rally in front of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) office in Quezon City to demand the suspension of operations—if not the immediate closure—of a landfill in their town.

Tony Bahoto, spokesperson of the Coalition for Garbage-Free San Mateo, said the people of San Mateo were "forced to suffer and pay dearly for every mistake" the DENR fails to act on the matter.

"So long as the landfill continues to operate in San Mateo, our health, environment and future continues to be threatened," Bahoto said.

He added that they were planning to file a case against Environment Secretary Lito Atienza and other DENR officials for graft and corruption.

Clemente Bautista, national coordinator of the Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment, said Atienza and the other DENR officials have a mandate to protect the environment and enforce the country's environmental laws.

"Failure to do so is tantamount to gross ignorance and negligence of their responsibility," he said.

The San Mateo Sanitary Landfill Development Corp. (SMSLDC) started operating the dump in March after securing an environmental compliance certificate (ECC) from the DENR.

But Bautista said they discovered that the company had lied about the location of the landfill, explaining that the facility was not located in Barangay Pintong Bukawe as stated in the ECC but in Barangays Ruby and Guinayang. The dump was also located near a protected forest area, he added.

Atienza, meanwhile, promised that he would revoke the ECC should it be proven that the dump operator deliberately misled the DENR about the location of the facility.

SAN MATEO residents hold a protest rally in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Quezon City Tuesday

SLEX smashup snags traffic; no one hurt

By Marlon Ramos

A FIVE-VEHICLE accident caused heavy traffic on the southbound lane of the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX) in Muntinlupa City yesterday.

No one was reported injured in the mid-morning multiple collision, police said, but the accident resulted in heavy traffic from the Alabang exit in Bicutan, Taguig to the Bicutan exit in Taguig City.

PSI Richard Brunios, exec in-vestigator, said it took more than an hour before vehicles flow in the area returned to normal.

Alvin Vidal, metro operator of the Highway Patrol Group of the Philippine National Police, said a Mitsubishi L300 van (SBX 136) driven by Randell Ramirez was moving on the expressway near the Bicutan Arrom factory at around 9:40 a.m. when it hit the back of a Toyota Corolla (PKP 801) driven by Thelma Bolilia.

Bolilia's car then collided with a Mitsubishi Galant (SGK 319). The impact sent the truck crashing into a Toyota RAV4 (UGE 570) which then hit another Mitsubishi L300 PB van.

No one seemed to know what caused Ramirez's van to hit the Corolla. Vidal said staff of the Civic Metro Manila Driving Corp. removed the five vehicles from the area an hour later.

Ramirez said the drivers of the vehicles later agreed not to press charges against each other.

Woman trader sues fellow trader for bouncing checks

By Julie M. Aurelio

A BUSINESSWOMAN HAS FILED a complaint against another trader for allegedly issuing P3.6 million worth of checks which bounced.

In a two-page complaint affidavit dated April 1 which was filed at the Quezon City Prosecution Office, Consuelo Reyes accused Emmeline Romero of scams and violating the Anti-Bouncing Check Law.

Reyes said she first met Romero when the two of them rented stalls that were beside each other in a commercial complex on Timog Avenue.

She added that on Feb. 15, she contacted Romero P2-mil-lion worth of jewelry after the latter said she wanted to see her items for selling purposes.

Some of the jewelry were lent while the rest had been consigned to her, Reyes said in her complaint.

She added that she was persuaded to start buying the jewelry to Romero after the latter issued 19 checks for the amount of P3.4 million as payment. The checks, however, bounced.

"I would not have parted with any pieces of jewelry if not for the false promises employed by Romero. [She] presented them the checks which she issued would be funded and honored by the banks. However all these checks were dishonored," Reyes said.

She added that up to now, Romero has yet to return the jewelry or pay her debt to her.

MetroBriefs

Leg massage costs man his life

A LEG massage cost a 43-year-old man his life after the former lost to neither of the women who was managing him stabbed her with 81 of addresses the other day, Jaime Lanap Jr., a resident of 14th Street corner Atlanta Street in Port Area, died 11 hours after he was brought to the Esperanza Maynila hot-multiple club wounds. He alleged assailant, automobile painter Rolando Karlo Jr., also known as "Jaycee-ress," fled after the stabbing and remains at large. Police said the victim was stabbed at around 7 a.m. Monday in his rented room. PSI Jonathan Bautista, case investigator, said that before the incident, Lanap was having his legs massaged by Julie Intuan when Karlo, who was armed with a fan knife, barged inside the victim's room and stabbed him. Motive was the former's refusal to [illegible]

Jeannette I. Andrade

NCRPO offers summer classes for kids

SEARCHPORT to keep the police close to the community, the National Capital Region Police Office will offer free summer classes for children aged 6 to 8 in its headquarters in Camp Bagong Diwa, Taguig City.

Supt. Rodolfo Jimenez, NCRPO community relations chief, yesterday said the project was part of their "Pulis ko, Tito ko" program which would also benefit out-of-school youth. Jimenez said the classes, which would be held today to Friday, would accommodate 50 children living in Camp Bagong Diwa and nearby villages.

The classes, he said, would be held at the NCRPO's Bahay Bukid Boy Care Center, which was constructed last year for the children of policemen assigned in the area. He said four licensed teachers who can now with the NCRPO as police non-commissioned officers would teach the children basic concepts in reading and writing.

Marlon Ramos

Man charged with raping kin

A MAN was charged with having the granddaughter of his cousin seven years after the sexual attacks allegedly took place. Walter Bala, a resident of Sta. Ana, was charged at the Manila Regional Trial Court with two counts of rape in relation to child abuse. The charges were filed on Monday and he had also recommended by Mabel Prosecutor Rochelle Bologlos for Bala's temporary liberty. Bala, who would be turned 54 years old on Friday, is said to have molested his granddaughter, who is the suspect's cousin, when the alleged incidents of rape took place in 2002. She told the National Bureau of Investigation Violence Against Women and Children Division that Bala raped her whenever his grandmother was not in the house. She added that her grandmother refused to believe her when she complained about Bala's actions. Bala, meanwhile, denied the accusations against him and claimed that the girl's grandmother made her tell a tale because he was suffering from [illegible]

Erika Sauler

Thieves steal school books, computers

THIEVES broke into the Manila Science High School on Monday and took 57 science books worth P48,000, Manila Police District probers said the school also lost P80,000 worth of computer equipment to burglars who entered the science training room of the school which is located at the corner of Taft Avenue and Padre Faura Street in Ermita, Manila. PSI Eugene Bautista, case investigator of the MPD Ermita police station-5, said the robbery probably took place between 6 a.m. and 3 p.m. on Monday when no one was around.

Jeannette I. Andrade

Rodriguez in standoff

Front page A01

[illegible] sword into by Garcia would be considered illegal.

Garcia has maintained that he was still the mayor pending the resolution of his recall motion by reconsideration filed with the Sandiganbayan, in which he questioned its decision to prematurely suspend him.

The Sandiganbayan yesterday recommended Garcia's [illegible] appeal to immediately hold the recall election for reconsideration.

The other day, Garcia asked the court to hold the hearing on April 16, instead of the original schedule of April 23.

However, the court still ruled if it shall reconsider the Garcia's request for an earlier hearing date, which was April 16, Sandiganbayan executive clerk of court Romeo Bersaluna said.

Obama eases travel, money transfers to Cuba

WASHINGTON—PRESIDENT Barack Obama is allowing Americans to make unlimited transfers of money and visits to relatives in Cuba and easing others' restrictions on Monday, advancing in a new era of openness toward the island nation ruled by communists for 50 years.

The formal announcement was made by presidential spokesperson Robert Gibbs and, in Spanish, by Dan Restrepo, the president's top aide on Latin American policy.

"The president would like to see greater freedom for the Cuban people. There are actions that he can and has taken today to open up the flow of information as to provide some important steps to help that," Gibbs said.

Gibbs said Obama is only a part of the equation, with the White House calling on Cuba to do more as well.

With the changes, Obama aims to loosen Cubans' dependence on the regime of Fidel Castro, hoping that will lead them to demand progress on political freedoms, the spokesperson said. About 1.5 million Americans have relatives on the island nation that turned to communism rule in 1959 when Castro seized control.

Some United States lawmakers protested the changes, saying they would funnel money or goods to the Castro regime. Others, backed by business and farm groups seeing new opportunities in Cuba, wanted Obama to go further and lift restrictions on travel by all Americans to Cuba.

Officials said Obama is keeping the decades-old US trade embargo—for now, to lean—arguing that that policy pressures the regime to free all political prisoners as one step toward normalized relations with the US.

Restrepo said US policy toward Cuba "is not known to have." He had no timetable for when future decisions might be made.

Obama had promised to take those steps as a presidential candidate. It has been known for over a week that Obama would announce them ahead of his attendance this weekend at a Summit of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago.

"There are no better ambassadors for freedom than Cuban Americans," Obama said in a campaign speech last May in Miami, the heart of the Cuban-American community. "It's time to let Cuban Americans see their mothers and fathers, their sisters and brothers. It's time to let Cuban-Americans' money make their families less dependent upon the Castro regime."

Other steps taken on Monday include expanding the things allowed in gift parcels sent to Cuba, such as clothes, personal hygiene items, seeds, fishing gear and other personal necessities. AP

A POLISH firefighter tosses down the smoldering remains of a shelter for homeless families after a fire, in Kamien Pomorski, Poland. —

Somali pirates hijack three more ships

MOMBASA—UNDETERRED BY US and French hostage rescues and the death of a comrade, Somali pirates brazenly hijacked three more ships in the Gulf of Aden, the key waterway that's become the focal point of the world's fight against piracy.

The M.V. Irene E.M. was hijacked early Monday but it was not known immediately where the ship is based or who owns it, two maritime security contractors said, speaking on conditions of anonymity because it is a sensitive issue by issue.

The ship put out a distress signal shortly after midnight "to say they had a suspicious vessel approaching. That rapidly turned into an attack and then a hijacking," one of the contractors told the Associated Press. "They cited in call in support on the emergency channels, but they were gone very quickly."

On Monday, Somali pirates also seized two Egyptian fishing boats in the Gulf of Aden off Somalia's northern coast, according to Egypt's Foreign Ministry. It cited a Somali diplomat in Cairo as saying the boats were the 24-Egyptians released at the time.

The latest seizures come after Navy SEAL snipers rescued American ship captain Richard Phillips on Sunday by killing three young pirates who held him captive in a drifting lifeboat for five days. A fourth pirate surrendered after seeking medical attention for a wound he received to trying to take over Phillips' vessel, the Maersk Alabama.

In Washington, President Barack Obama appeared to move the piracy issue higher on his agenda, vowing "to halt the rise of piracy" and saying the United States would work with nations elsewhere in the world.

"I want us to be very clear that we are resolved to halt the rise of piracy in that region and to address that goal, we're going to have to continue to work with our partners to prevent future attacks," Obama said at a news conference on Monday.

The 19 crew members of the Maersk vessel celebrated their ship's freedom with beer and an evening barbecue on Monday in the Kenyan port of Mombasa, said crewmate Ben Quinn, who ventured out holding a Tusker beer—a popular brew in Kenya.

The next morning, the crew left the cargo ship and climbed into a boat. It was not immediately clear how long the crew was planning to stay. Some crew have said they would return home soon, probably by air.

Ibrahim, the vessel's chief cook who, among other things, stirred 25 meals against piracy.

"It's time for us to step in and put an end to this evils," Dauer Murphy said. "It's a crisis. Either up." The US is considering new options to fight piracy, including adding Navy gunships along the Somali coastline and launching a campaign to disable pirate "motherships," according to military officials. AP

22 people killed as fire razes shelter for homeless in Poland

KAMIEN POMORSKI—SURvivors of a fire that killed 22 people at a three-story shelter for homeless families in Poland have described a fast-moving inferno that forced some to jump from windows into snow.

Six of the victims were children and another 20 people were injured, most of whom sustained broken bones after leaping from the building on Monday to escape the blaze in the northwestern city of Kamien Pomorski.

Poland's president, prime minister, retired governors and others attended the building's gutted fire regardless. He suggested flammable construction materials may have contributed to the fire's speed and intensity.

Survivors answers appeared to support that.

"I couldn't breathe, so I opened the windows and looked out, and the door was on fire because it was essentially made of paper," a survivors told reporters as the scene in foreign claimed on TVN24 television.

"I put my pants on and boots, and a friend grew me a jacket, and there wasn't any more time because it was burning like a torch. Some people jumped into the trees," the unidentified middle-aged man said.

The cause of the fire, which began around 1 a.m. (2300 GMT Sunday), was under investigation. The building is owned by the county government.

"If the building burns in that fast a rate, and if suddenly poured gasoline over the entire building and set it alight on purpose—and that theory doesn't exist right now—then there must have been some fundamental flaw in the construction," President Lech Kaczynski told reporters after visiting the site.

Police and fire investigators continued to comb through the building's smoldering shell late Monday in search of clues.

The first floor was built of concrete, and the top two floors had a metal frame. But officials said the walls appeared to be made from a highly flammable material. AP

Passenger lands plane as pilot dies

TOKYO—DOUG WHITE AND his family had just endured a stressful takeoff and were starting through the clouds when the pilot guiding their twin-engine plane lifted his head back and made a guttural sound.

The pilot, Joe Cabrak, was unconscious. And though White had his pilot's license, he had never flown a plane as large as this.

"I need help," he radioed a King Air pilot in talk to, "We're in trouble," he radioed.

There he turned to his wife and two daughters. "You all may pray right," Behind him, his wife trembled. Antonio year-old Bailey cried. Eighteen-year-old Maggie threw up.

While, 36, landed the plane on his own about 30 minutes later, roamed through the harrowing ordeal by air traffic controllers who described recently how to bring the aircraft to safety. The pilot died, but White somehow managed.

When a controller asked whether he was on autopilot, White replied: "I'm in the good Lord's hands flying this Hiner Delta Whiskey" giving the code for the aircraft.

White had logged about 100 hours recently flying a single-engine Cessna T210 but had no experience flying the larger, larger King Air. AP

Bishop turned president admits affair

ASUNCION—PARAGUAY'S President Fernando Lugo admitted on Monday he is the father of a child conceived while he was still a Roman Catholic bishop.

Lugo surprised journalists by acknowledging he had an intimate relationship with Viviana Carrillo, the child's mother—just five days after lawyers for Carrillo announced they were filing a paternity suit against him.

"Here and now, before my people and my government, I declare with absolute honesty and a sense of duty and transparency in addition to the controversy provoked by the paternity suit, that there was a relationship with Viviana Carrillo," Lugo said.

"I assume all responsibilities ... and I recognize the paternity of the child," he added, promising to protect the boy's privacy.

The president said he will not comment further on the matter, but will instead focus on his presidency.

Carrillo did not immediately respond to Lugo's surprise announcement, but Lawyer Claudio Bonifaschik said he was pleased. AP

LUGO —

WORLD BRIEFS

Last of octuplets released from hospital

LOS ANGELES—Nadya Suleman has all her babies home. The last of the world's longest surviving set of octuplets was released from a hospital in suburban Los Angeles on Monday night after spending more than two months in the neonatal intensive care unit. Jonah, the smallest of the octuplets, who were born nine weeks premature on Jan. 26, has gone home to join his brothers and sisters, a spokesperson with Kaiser Permanente Baldwin Medical Center said. Jonah weighed just 0.92 kilograms. Hospital officials now he now weighs 2.00kg, and is able to bottle feed. AP

Phil Spector found guilty of murder

LOS ANGELES—Rock music producer Phil Spector was convicted on Monday of second-degree murder in the shooting death of a film actress at his mansion six years ago, a verdict that will send him to prison for at least 19 years but may eventually appeal. A Superior Court jury returned the verdict after about 30 hours of deliberations. The jury had the option of choosing the lesser charge of involuntary manslaughter, but did not do so. The panel also found Spector guilty of using a firearm in committing a crime. Spector exhibited no reaction to the verdict. Judge Larry Paul Fidler remanded him to jail immediately. AP

Fiji expels 3 foreign journalists

SUVA—Fiji's military government expelled three foreign television journalists on Tuesday, a day after threatening them with deportation as local media protested new censorship by canceling news broadcasts and leaving pages of newspapers blank. Bothering sensitivity over international coverage of the latest power grab led by Commodore Frank Bainimarama, security officials detained Australian reporter Sean Dorney, New Zealand reporter Sia Aiolos and cameraman Matt Smith before putting them on flights out of Nadi international Airport early Sunday. The expulsions were confirmed by their media organizations in the two countries. AP

Mexico protests Burger King ad

MEXICO CITY—Mexico is protesting what it says is a whopper of an insult. An advertisement by Burger King's Mexican Whopper burger that has a cartoon bumper sticker a small sombrero dressed in a rope resembling a Mexican flag. The sombrero bounces up with a lanky American cowboy almost twice his height to illustrate the cross-border blend of flavors. "The taste of Texas with a little spicy Mexican," a narrator's voice says. The latter crackly boosts the sombrero up to each high cowboy and helps clean tall sombreros, while the Mexican helps the cowboy open a jar. Mexico's ambassador to Spain said on Monday he has written a letter to Burger King's officers in that nation objecting to the ad and asking that it be removed. AP

14 feared drowned as boat capsizes

MULTAN, PAKISTAN—At least five people were killed and nine others were missing and feared drowned on Tuesday when a boat capsized in shallow river waters in central Pakistan, police said. The boat carrying farm workers capsized in the Indus in the Kandian district, around 300 kilometers west of Multan, when it ran into a strong current, district police chief Babar Nadeem Khan said. Rescuers have saved five people and taken out the bodies of five others, while nine people were missing, feared drowned," Khan told AFP. There were 18 passengers said one boatman on board and they were crossing the river to harvest wheat, he said. AP

The WORLD

Edsa Lorenne B. Sierra

N. Korea quits nuclear talks, to restart plant

SEOUL—NORTH KOREA SAID ON TUESDAY IT would quit international nuclear disarmament talks and restart a plant that makes bomb-grade plutonium after the United Nations chastised it for launching a long-range rocket.

The UN Security Council on Monday unanimously condemned North Korea's launch on April 5 as contravening a UN ban, and demanded unforeseen more of existing sanctions against Pyongyang.

Prickly North Korea said in a Foreign Ministry statement that the UN action and responsible sanctions nuclear talks were an infringement of its sovereignty and it "will never participate in the (nuclear) talks any longer nor ... be bound to any agreements of the six-party talks."

The statement, carried by the official KCNA news agency, said North Korea would "bolster its nuclear deterrence for self-defense in every way" actively consider building its own light-water nuclear reactor, "revive nuclear facilities and reprocess used nuclear fuel rods."

Experts said the impoverished and energy-starved North India like technology to make its advanced light-water reactor.

Financial markets in Seoul and Tokyo were not affected by Pyongyang's announcement, with investors seeing it as more of the same nothing they have come to expect from the reclusive state.

North Korea began taking apart its Soviet-era Yongbyon nuclear plant more than a year ago as a part of a disarmament-for-aid deal it reached with China, Japan, Russia, South Korea and the United States.

The UN response to a launch widely seen as a disguised test of a long-range missile will have little immediate impact on the North's faltering economy and the divided international coalition could embolden leader Kim Jong-Il, analysts said.

A MAN walks past models of a North Korean Scud-B missile (taller) and South Korean Hline missile at the Korean War Memorial Museum in Seoul on April 14. AFP/JUNG YEON-JE

Japan and Russia urged North Korea to return to the six-nation nuclear talks.

But China, which shares a border with North Korea and is the closest thing Pyongyang can claim as a major ally, called on all parties to "keep at one ear to the broader picture" and exercise "calm and restraint." Foreign Ministry spokesperson Jiang Yu said Beijing still hoped to achieve the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula through dialogue and negotiations.

Experts said the North could have its plant shut separate plutonium from spent fuel rods up and running again in as little as three months.

"North Korea's statements are always a mixture of bluff and real threats, but I think the threats are more real this time, and I think they'll continue for the next few months at least," said Shi Yinhong, a regional security expert at Renmin University in Beijing. Reuters

Iran open to dialogue with six world powers

TEHRAN—IRAN SAID ON Monday it would welcome constructive dialogue with six world powers, including the United States, on its disputed nuclear work.

State television quoted Iran's chief nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili as making the comment in a telephone conversation with European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana.

The United States, Russia, China, France, Germany and Britain said on Wednesday they would ask Solana to invite Iran to a meeting to find "a diplomatic solution to this critical issue," referring to the long-running nuclear row.

That marked a major shift in US policy under President Barack Obama, whose predecessor George W. Bush's administration shunned direct talks with Tehran as long as it pressed ahead with nuclear activity the West fears has military aims.

The television report said Solana called for renewed discussions because the two sides aimed at a new era of cooperation. It did not say where he spoke with Jalili.

Jalili "welcomed dialogue between Iran and the six countries on constructive cooperation," the television report said.

He emphasized the necessity of correct understanding of international realities and developments." Jalili said Iran would give an official response to the six powers' statements, issued after a meeting of their senior officials in London last week, without saying when.

A US official, who spoke on condition of anonymity said no date had been set yet for a meeting between major powers and Iran but it could be "soon," possibly within four to six weeks.

The Obama administration has offered a "new beginning" of diplomatic engagement if Iran "unclenches its fist." Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on Thursday the Islamic Republic would be ready for talks with the West if they were based on respect and justice.

But Tehran also says it wants to see a real shift in US policy from the Bush administration, which spearheaded a drive to isolate Tehran over its refusal to stop enriching uranium, which can have both civilian and military uses. Reuters

Editor Raul G. Manalo • Assistant Editor Connie S. Martinez

BUSINESS

Korean firms investing P8B in biofuels

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Biodiesel in GenSan, bioethanol in Tarlac

By Nico T. Olchondra

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE HAS SIGNED TWO agreements with South Korean companies on the infusion of P8 billion in the biodiesel and bioethanol industries.

This was disclosed by Efraim R. Agbisit, president of Philippine Agricultural Development and Commercial Corp., the government's marketing arm of the agriculture department.

Agbisit said the projects would be the Philippines' first collaboration in the biofuel sector with South Ko

BUSINESS/B3

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Filipinos upbeat, but spending less /B14

25 must-haves for a real SUV

New 5+2 Seat System
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Korean firms ...

Front page B1

era. He said both investments would involve production and processing facilities.

One of the two companies, which he declined to name, is investing in biodiesel using jatropha as raw material. The biodiesel project will use 5,000 hectares of land in Oriental Mindoro City.

The other Korean company, Agbon intl, would be investing in bioethanol using sugarcane cloth as raw material. The bioethanol project will cover 15,000 hectares of land in Iloilo.

Agbon said the Iloilo bioethanol facility could be the biggest in the Philippines.

"The facility in Iloilo targets 300,000 liters a day. San Carlos [Bioenergy Inc.], which will be fully commissioned in September, can produce some 120,000 liters a day. The other existing biofuel facility, Leyte Agri [Corp.], produces about 30,000 liters a day," Agbon said.

He said that both projects were in the financial closure stage and would see ground breaking ceremonies.

The investors in bioethanol last cut to secure planting materials, while the company that will engage in bioethanol has signed deals with landowners and already has plantings for future use.

"Hopefully we can finalize the investments in time for the President's visit to South Korea at the end of May for the celebration of the 50th anniversary of Korea-Philippine friendship," Agbon said.

Bishop's tax alternative rule primarily made to limit losses or expenses incurred on plants, including their retainers and fibers; animal waste; industrial waste and the biodegradable component of solid waste. It is considered to be cheaper than petroleum or imported crude oil.

Turning a corner

(IT MAY, OPPOSED by many bankers at its inception and in early years were mocked by foreign and, sometimes, outright hostility from its domicile, but the country's sanctum fund exchange seems to have finally turned a corner.

According to an industry source, the Philippine Dealing and Exchange Corp. (PDEX) is expected to report its first full-year net profit this year since it started operations in 2005.

Representatives of a strong 2009 are being lauded by the first quarter net income that PDEX is expected to report at its board meeting on Friday, which is enough to cover the full-year loss of 2008.

The higher revenues are actually being helped by the ongoing financial crisis since investors intend to move their money into safe-haven assets.

For now, the shareholders—which include the likes of heavy bond users San Miguel Corp. and Philippine Associated Life and General Insurance Co., as well as the Philippine Stock Exchange—will be pleased with the results after enduring years of tossing and sibling by the currency markets.

Dec 30 L. Lewis

Eyesore no more

AFTER OVER a quarter of a century, the 20-story structure that used to be a white elephant at the corner of Edsa and Ortigas Avenue in Mandaluyong will be knocked to the ground by Tower and Mall.

The complex, which includes a high-rise office building and a low-rise mall, will start operations next month after more than a year of rehabilitation work that cost its owner, Alphaland (or Bobby Gaspar and Ashmore lease), a cool P1.2 billion on top of the same amount used to buy the property from the Papa family.

The office building will have 37,000 square meters of leasable space at an absolute lease price of P400 to P750 a square meter, while the mall has more than 20,000 square meters of space. The complex is linked to the Magdalena MRT station.

In line with the Ongpin-Aduana group's style of doing things big, the owners installed two 324-square-meter LED displays—each four-storey high—on both sides of the building, for outdoor advertising purposes ("visible one kilometer away," the brochures boast).

And since the former eyesore has been lying idle since the Illarcos era, Alphaland had to open its secret to how engineering firm Aromin-Ick by guarantee its structural integrity.

Of course, the proof of the pudding is the extent in which the market will welcome the new supply in office and commercial space, given the difficult times in the property sector. Ronnie L. Lazo

Mini proxy war

TALES OF A "mini" proxy war have preceded Philex mining's annual stockholders' meeting on April 21.

A certain group of stockholders, according to the grapevine, has been stockpiling proxies possibly to effect a management change in the company's set. Some suspect this may have something to do with the headaches over the exercise of preemptive rights on company shares. Its angst over the company's participation in mid-Oliver et Exploration.

Whether this alleged coup d'etat will prosper, we'll find out soon enough. David C. Dumlao

Shareholder activism

IF YOURE considering why PLE president Ernesto Ura recently called for "shareholder activism" in this busy season of stockholders' meetings, it's not merely to lengthen the agenda of local tomtoms who delight in taking the center stage during these gatherings.

Industry sources say that in a recent forum by the Fund Managers Association of the Philippines in Boracay where Ura was a guest speaker, someone was asked over a spate of corporate actions believed to be questionable for minority shareholders. Their recent cases were cited: PLDT's plan to take out Pitid's cellular businesses and consolidate everything under salient Smart; San Miguel's overpayment of Global 5000 to avoid the tender offer in Petron Corp. and the transfer of Bonpure' voting rights to its publicly listed complement at First Philippine Holdings Corp. to a non-interest holding firm to move more to avert a hostile takeover.

"We can't prevent them and set the decisions they make purely affect our shares," says a fund manager present during the dialogue with Ura in the case of PLDT, for instance, the fund manager said the stockholder will lose a steady, high-dividend paying telco stock.

Smart is thus expected to make a very juicy tender offer if it wants to prevent a revolution from stockholders who don't relish the thought of suddenly being forced to reinvest their investments in the fast-growing Talk N' Text mobile phone brand (see Mercado). David C. Dumlao

Wild cards in Meralco

GIVEN THE family feud created by the sale of Meralco, some say it's not far-fetched that the Lopezes' remaining 13.4-percent stake in the power conglomerate will be sold to the highest bidder for lunchtime. Members their Manolo Lopez and president Ong de Jesus to the board—will act as a decisive swing vote in the future. But it won't be too easy for this diluted block to jump into an alliance with the San Miguel camp, given a shareholders' agreement that requires the Lopezes to vote in tandem with the PLDT group.

Both the PLDT and San Miguel groups insist there won't be a battle of the titans in Meralco. But as they say in the Highlander movie, "There can be only one."

PLDT chair Manuel V. Pangilinan has already indicated interest in acquiring more than and is soliciting relatively positive are still left out there ahead of Meralco's annual stockholders' meeting next month.

Another wild card that can potentially affect shareholder dynamics in Meralco is the outcome of the 2010 presidential race (whose will be one). David C. Dumlao

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Gov't eyes retail T-bonds in July

By Bernel W. Dantinga

THE GOVERNMENT IS CONsidering to issue retail treasury bonds in July when P16 billion of small-denominated debt papers would be maturing.

"This will depend on our cash position, if we can roll" over the government's funding needs, National Treasurer Roberto R. Tan said in an interview.

[illegible] small investors because of the low minimum in

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Gov't raises ₱8.5B from sale of T-bonds

Average yield at 6.268%

By Roxand N. Cheneliz

THE BUREAU OF THE TREASURY YESTERday raised ₱8.5 billion in five-year bonds as investors looked for instruments to shield their money from maturing issues.

Buyers oversubscribed yesterday's debt paper by more than triple at ₱28.13 billion, which the Treasury said was due to an upsurge in liquidity this week.

"There are treasury bonds and bills that would mature this week worth a total of ₱20.72 billion," said National Treasurer Roberto B. Tan.

"Investors want to reinvest (the proceeds)," Tan said in an interview.

The yield for yesterday's issue averaged 6.268 percent, which Tan described as "just satisfactory" of the secondary market rates.

Bidders in the secondary auction offered 6.4344 percent, while buyers bid 6.2257 percent.

"At a coupon rate of 6.25 percent, the yield for the latest five-year bonds is 3.0 basis points higher than that of the previous issue," Tan said.

He said investors opposite were also influenced by anticipation of a favorable outcome of the meeting of the Monetary Board—the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' policy-making body—on Thursday.

Tan said investors were expecting a further cutting of the BSP's overnight borrowing and lending rates even as BSP officials have said they would be more conservative in continuing a series of rate reduction.

In the past four months, the BSP had cut overnight rates by a total of 1.25 basis points, with the borrowing rate settling at 4.75 percent and the lending rate at 6.75 percent.

For the second quarter, the Treasury plans to borrow ₱104.3 billion in bills and bonds, higher by ₱11.5 billion from the first quarter program.

The Treasury will offer ₱40 billion in bills and ₱64.5 billion in bonds with tenors of three, five, 10 and 20 years.

In March, Finance Secretary Margarito B. Teves said the budget deficit would hit ₱93.7 billion in the second quarter and ₱93.1 billion in the third quarter.

Teves added that there would be a cash-set budget surplus of ₱192 million in the fourth quarter.

Gov't eyes retail T-bonds in July To page B3

minimum of ₱5,000.

While large companies and government-owned firms may also buy RTBs, government securities eligible dealers are deemed to prioritize retail investors.

In January, he said the Treasury was considering to issue zero RTBs "in the next few months" to replenish maturing RTBs and maintain liquidity in the market.

Back then, the agency was anticipating the maturity by mid-February of ₱134 billion in bonds of various issues.

However, Tan said in February the plan was put off as the previous announcement contributed to speculation in the financial markets and put upward pressure on interest rates.

In a related development, Tan said a planned tie-deal sold them for Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. was still in the books although there was yet no definite date set for it.

"There will still be a road show with PSALM's main objective being the introduction of its name to the global investment community," he said.

Asked whether there would be favorable response to privatize at borrowing amid the continuing global financial crunch, Tan said, "The situation is improving."

He added that PSALM was inclined to borrow abroad for $1 financing needs since its liabilities were in foreign currency.

Created under the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001, PSALM is mandated to dispose of the power generation assets of the state-owned National Power Corp. and the power delivery networks of National Transmission Corp. PSALM is also mandated to manage their liabilities.

aboitiz
Power Corporation

PhP1.5 Billion

8.03% Three (3) Year Fixed Rate Bonds due 2012
8.76% Five (5) Year Fixed Rate Bonds due 2014

ISSUER	**Aboitiz Power Corporation**
ISSUE SIZE	**PhP1.5 Billion in 3-Year and 5-Year bonds**
OVER SUBSCRIPTION OPTION	**Up to P 1.5 Billion Pesos**
USE OF PROCEEDS	**Partially fund acquisition of Tiwi Makban**
INTEREST PAYMENT	**Quarterly**
MATURITY	**3-Year Bonds - April 2012** **5-Year Bonds - April 2014**
ISSUER'S EARLY REDEMPTION OPTION	**For 5-Year Bonds, on the 3RD anniversary of issue Date**
OFFER PERIOD	**April 15-24, 2009**
MINIMUM INVESTMENT	**P 50,000***

* In increments of P10,000 above the minimum amount and is further subject to each Underwriter's minimum investment requirements

Joint Lead Managers and Underwriters

BDO BPI Capital First Metro Investment Corporation ING

For more information, please call:

BDO Capital: 878-4128/28 or 840-7000 loc 3167
First Metro Investment: 241-4301-07
BPI Capital: 845- 5895/ 5897/ 5736/ 5708
ING Bank: 479-6878/ 479-6784

Napocor seeks coal

Tender for Pagbilao plant in Quezon

By Amy R. Remo

STATE-OWNED NATIONAL POWER CORP. is looking to buy next month 195,800 metric tons of coal to fuel the 700-megawatt Pagbilao coal-fired power plant in Quezon.

Napocor, the country's biggest power producer, said that the tender for the supply and delivery of coal to the power facility is slated on May 13. It will be preceded by a pre-bidding conference on April 29.

Napocor president Froilan Tampinco said that Napocor would need at least 2.4 million MT of coal this year to power all of its coal plants.

This is lower than the 4.16 million MT of coal that Napocor bought in 2008 because of the privatization of some of its power facilities last year.

Tampinco also said that Napocor would seek another 140,000 MT of coal for its 1,200-MW Sual and 200-MW Naga coal-fired power plants. However, no definite date has been set for the tender.

Three Gwe plants, along with the privatized 600-MW Masinloc facility in Zambales, account for about a fourth of the 9,000 MW of dependable capacity in the Luzon grid.

Napocor has brought coal in from Australia this year, reliable imported P5.31 billion worth of supply contracts to four Indonesian firms.

Coal has traditionally accounted for close to a third of the many Gwe's generation mix as it is cheaper than fuel oil.

CEBU HOLDINGS, INC.

CEBU HOLDINGS INC.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of CEBU HOLDINGS, INC. will be held on WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2009 at 10:00 o'clock in the morning at Ballrooms 1 & 2 of the Cebu City Marriott Hotel, Cebu City, with the following

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Determination of Quorum
3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting
4. Annual Report
5. Ratification of All Acts and Resolutions of the Board of Directors and Management
6. Election of Directors (including Independent Directors)
7. Election of External Auditors and Approval of Remuneration
8. Consideration of such other business as may properly come before the meeting
9. Adjournment

Only stockholders of record at the close of business on March 16, 2009 shall be entitled to notice of, and to vote at, this meeting.

Makati City, March 4, 2009.

FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

RENATO C. OSORIO
Assistant Corporate Secretary

Stockholder Assistance
For matters regarding change in address and account status, lost or damaged stock certificates, please write or call Stock Transfer Service, Inc. 34 Panay Road, Barangay Obrero, Mindanao Avenue, Makati City, Tel. Nos. 9128877/920-2055 Fax No. 920-2056

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INSULAR LIFE

ABS-CBN '08 profit up 9%

No airtime rate hike seen until mid this year

By Doris C. Dumlao

ABS-CBN BROADCASTING Corp. reported a 9-percent rise in consolidated core profit in 2008 to P1.39 billion on the back of higher airtime revenue and higher film and cable subscription.

Given a tough global economic environment, which is seen to weigh down ad-time revenue, the company is projecting flat growth to net earnings this year. It also plans to put on hold any airtime rate increase until the middle of the year.

Capital spending this year runs set at P2.3 billion, P1.7 billion of which will be used to finance capital investment and upgrade production equipment. The rest will finance film rights acquisition, ABS-CBN chief financial officer Rolando Valdoza said in a briefing yesterday.

"That doesn't include the amount needed for our DTV (digital terrestrial TV) venture, which was estimated to hit P1 billion a year for the next five years," Valdoza said.

Cable provider SkyCable contributed P800 million for this year, about the same as the level last year.

Airtime revenue contracted in the first two months of the year but ABS-CBN started seeing some signs of recovery in March, Valdoza said.

Despite the global downturn, he said the TFC (The Filipino Channel) cable's global business is very resilient.

"It posted double-digit growth last year and it looks like it is going to remain that this year. Middle East, for instance, saw more than 20-percent growth in business," he said.

In 2008, consolidated revenue from airtime and direct sales rose by 13 percent to P23.3 billion, including a 5-percent contribution from SkyCable for the three quarters beginning April.

Core airtime businesses registered a 1-percent contraction in revenues during the year to P19.4 billion despite a 56-percent growth in cable TV ad-time sales. SkyCable contributed P900 million of airtime sales revenue from April to December 2008, bringing consolidated airtime revenues to P23.3 billion.

The revenue contribution from ABS-CBN's direct sales businesses have steadily increased in the past few years, reaching P8.9 billion or 39 percent of the total last year.

In the meantime, ABS-CBN curbed its expenses in 2008 by 1 percent to P17.45 billion given continuing efforts to tighten Solidbuilders Financial discipline and spending restraints.

Based on a survey from global research specialist Taylor Nelson Sofres for March this year, ABS-CBN got the highest national TV ratings with an overall audience share of 44 percent or 6 percentage points higher than GMA's 38 percent.

A JAPANESE businessman passes before a share prices board in Tokyo on Tuesday. Japanese shares prices fell 113.35 points or close at 8,811.08 points at the morning session of the Tokyo Stock Exchange, marking losses on Wall Street, where investors took profits ahead of a flurry of corporate earnings results. AFP

APC to issue P1.5B in bonds

By Amy R. Remo

LISTED FIRM APC Group Inc., yesterday signed underwriting documents for the planned issuance of up to P1.5 billion worth of bonds.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, APC corporate secretary M. Dionisio Dpuis said the peso-denominated fixed rate retail bonds would have terms of three years and five years.

The year lead manager for the issue are BDO Capital & Investment Corp., BPI Capital Corp., First Metro Investment Corp. and ING Bank N.V. (Manila branch).

Bank of the Philippine Islands-Investment Management and Trust Group and Philippine Depository & Trust Corp. were appointed trustee and registrar, and paying agent, respectively.

Proceeds of the proposed from the issue would be used to fund the 40-percent down payment for APC's acquisition of the 7.07-megawatt Biak-Bi-Nabe Hydroelectric Power Plant in Biak-Bi-Nabe, Mindoro Occidental.

APC, through affiliate AP Renewables, won the bidding last year for the power facility.

In December last year, APC also signed an agreement for the issuance of P1.50 billion in corporate notes to mature in five years and seven years.

Proceeds from the notes issue were earmarked for refinancing of loans and other corporate purposes.

Market succumbs to profit-taking

SHARES CLOSED 0.30 PERCENT LOWER yesterday due to continued profit-taking after rising for almost four weeks, dealers said.

The composite index fell 5.31 points to 2,697.89 while the all-shares index rose 0.14 percent to 1,322.32. There were 312 gainers, 76 losers and 39 unchanged.

Value totalled 2.724 billion shares worth P1.057 billion.

The peso traded at 47.787 to the dollar yesterday up from 47.795 at the close on the previous trading day.

"The market just succumbed to profit-taking," said Maxim Cruz of Asiasec Equities Inc.

"But it still shows the steady four-week rally," he added.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. fell 1.35 percent to P2,199 while Globe Telecom fell 3.17 percent to P860.

However, Ayala Corp. rose 0.99 percent to P215 while Manila Electric Co. added 3.95 percent to P90. AFP

Megaworld starts 3rd phase of Manhattan Garden City

MEGAWORLD-CORE HAS LAUNCHED THE third phase of its Manhattan Garden City residential condominium project in Ayanna Center, a prime project expected to generate P6 billion in additional sales revenue.

The project, dubbed the Manhattan Heights, is a joint venture with the Ayanna group. It will involve the construction of four towers at the center has received access All Mall.

The first tower of Manhattan Heights will have 406 residential units, all with bathrooms. Prices were set at P2.5 million for a studio, P3.7 million for a one-bedroom unit and P6.1 million for a two-bedroom unit.

In a statement, Megaworld chairman and chief executive officer Andrew Tan said the three new phases of Manhattan Garden City were sold out in just about two years. The combined volumes of both phases, Manhattan Subway Residence and Manhattan Parkview Residence, have about 2,000 residential units.

The project sits along Gen. Romulo Avenue in near Aurora Boulevard and Edsa in the other proximity to LRT2 and MRT3, tourist attractions in the Araneta Center.

More than 20 different amenities are being planned for Manhattan Heights, including skylights, a jogging path, pools and gardens decks at the podium level.

A 600 garden at the four topmost floors of each tower of Manhattan Heights is also part of the design in line with environment-friendly endeavors. The green-roofing development concept aims to lessen the levels of pollution at the fourth floor podium deck, while the sky garden's greenery is meant to cleanse the air and reduce heat waves.

"As a company that is committed to the preservation of our fragile environment, Megaworld is proud to present green landscape at Manhattan Heights City. We hope that investors and aspiring homeowners will respond overwhelmingly well to our commitment," Tan said.

Megaworld Corp., which is among the 30 companies included in the Philippine Stock Exchange index, is a leading residential condominium and business properties operating office buildings developer. Twelve Manhattan

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SM Residences sets a new standard in urban living:

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Princeton Residences' 40-floor residential condominium development is expected to rise to the heart of San Mateo, right next to LRT 2's Gilmore Station.

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Princeton Residences offers the luxury of a hotel at the best possible value, designed to make you the best possible home.

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SM Residences values time, as well as comfort and convenience, which is why property management services have been made available consistent with 5-star hotel living experience: unit leasing, general maintenance and chambermaid services are offered to residents. Units may be leased to your absence or according to your specifications. Dedicated staff offers general maintenance and chambermaid services at your request, all for a nominal fee. Value-added services for hassle-free living.

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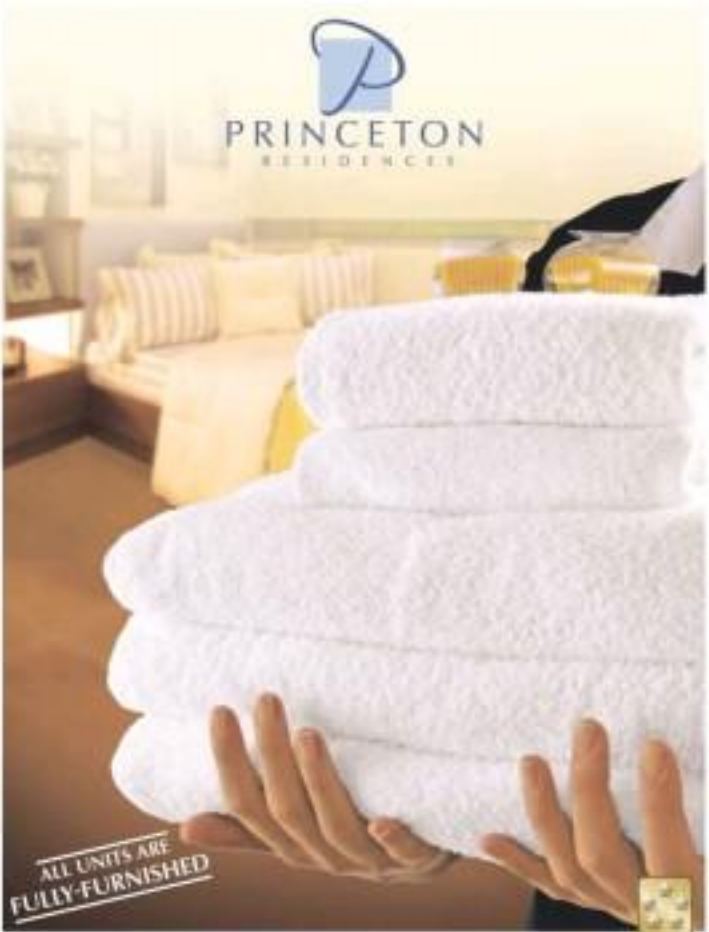
Princeton Residences' amenities include a swimming pool with poolside cabana, a creative lounge, and a commercial area – all Wi-Fi covered.

Right next to the LRT2 Gilmore Station, Princeton Residences is just around the corner from the cyber hub on Jelliaan Street; near schools like St. Paul University, Xavier School and Immaculate Conception Academy; Ground-Up Shopping Center; St. Luke's Medical Center, Cardinal Santos Medical Center, and the Trans-Metro terminal site.



Property management services have been made available consistent with 5-star hotel living experience

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Net FDI declined by 51.9% in January

BSP says global downturn now taking its toll on RP

By Norma V. Domingo

THE NET INFLOW OF FOREIGN DIRECT investments slid to $139 million in January, or 51.9 percent lower than the $287 million posted in the same month last year, according to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

BSP data showed that January figures mirrored those for the full-year 2008, opening a year in which analysts expected the country to feel the bite of the global financial crisis.

Last year, net inflows fell 45 percent, to $1.32 billion from $2.92 billion in 2007.

"General macroeconomic headwinds have continued to affect FDI inflows into the country although at a lower level, given the difficult global economic conditions," said Amando M. Tetangco Jr., Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas governor.

Tetangco said in a statement reinvestors' equity capital infusion and reinvested earnings in local corporations contributed to net FDI inflows during the month.

Equity capital posted net inflows at $56 million—a decrease of 34.1 percent from $82 million in January 2008.

Equity capital inflows totaled $59 million, while outflows reached $3 million, with transactions mainly directed to the real estate, financial intermediation and trade and commerce sectors.

Reinvested earnings amounted to $17 million, a reversal of the net outflow realized in the same month in 2008, as foreign enterprises opted to retain earnings in local corporations.

A net outflow of $82 million was recorded in the year-ago period.

On the other hand, the balance of the other capital account reversed to a net outflow of $98 million from a net inflow of $264 million last year.

The BSP said this was due mainly to intercompany loan payments by local subsidiaries, affiliates or their parent companies abroad.

Other capital accounts consist largely of intercompany borrowing and lending between foreign direct investors and their subsidiaries or affiliates in the Philippines.

The BSP has been easing its monetary policy in the hope of boosting investment amid the global downturn.

Since December, the BSP has cut its overnight borrowing and lending rates by a total 125 basis points to 6.75 percent and 8.75 percent, respectively.

TETANGCO

The BSP's Monetary Board, which will meet on Thursday, is expected to continue easing the policy rates, although officials have said it would be more conservative in doing so.

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MUSTARD SHOP

Reduce income tax rate, watchdog urges gov't

By Abigail L. Ho

THE CONSUMER AND OIL PRICE Watch is urging the government to consider downsizing the existing income tax rate of 38 percent to 25 percent by 2013.

In a statement issued yesterday, COPW chair Raul Concepcion said the country should at least match the global average of 25 percent.

"Lowering the tax rate will not only boost tax compliance, but will also encourage the underground economy to surface. Hence, our tax base will be expanded," Concepcion said. "Our goal of lowering the 30 percent tax rate to 28 percent by year 2010, and ultimately to 25 percent by 2013, is certainly doable."

University of the Philippines economists Dante Canlas, Felipe Medalla and Benjamin Diokno had earlier made the same proposal.

For the vice president of the country, Diokno said, tax reforms, in general, should be the administration's centerpiece.

Diokno said tax reforms had three basic goals: to broaden the tax base and generate more revenues to reduce the budget deficit and finance public goods and social protection programs, to reduce the net burden of regressive and distortionary taxes, and to simplify and make more neutral and efficient the financial sector's tax structure.

Aside from lowering the income tax rate, the three economists also suggested increasing the current 11-percent value-added tax rate to 15 percent.

Diokno reasoned that "too much consumption should be penalized."

"VAT is consumption tax," he said. "We can offset the increase in the VAT rate by implementing lower personal income tax and corporate tax rates."

Concepcion said, however, that instead of raising the VAT rate, the government should consider rationalizing incentives, especially for export zone locators.

"While we want to encourage foreign investments, these incentives perpetuate a on government's capacity to collect revenue," Concepcion said. "Therefore, there must be an urgent review of our investment incentives instead of increasing the VAT rate from 12 percent to 15 percent."

Philodrill gets SEC nod to hike capital stock

By Amy R. Remo

THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMmission has approved listed firm Philodrill Corp.'s increase in capital stock to P2 billion from P1.55 billion.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Philodrill corporate secretary Adrian S. Adlac yesterday said the P2-billion capital stock is divided into 2.00 billion shares with a par value of one centavo a share.

He said the company received the approval on March 6 (April 15).

Adlac further disclosed that, in a separate certificate also issued on Monday, the SEC had approved the amendment of the company's articles of incorporation to reflect the capital stock increase.

SEC had likewise approved the change in the primary purpose of the company from a holding firm to "a petroleum exploration and development company."

Incorporated in 1969, Philodrill used to engage fully in oil, gas and mineral exploration and development.

But in 1989, the company realized that it would need to balance the risks associated with its petroleum activities. It then changed its primary purpose to that of a diversified holding company while retaining petroleum and mineral exploration and development as its secondary purpose.

Currently, Philodrill is a stakeholder in several service contracts all over the country, including Service Contract 14 covering Nido and Matinloc, SC 14C-1 Galoc, SC 14C-2 West Linapacan, SC 6-Cadlao, SC 6A Octon, SC 6B Bonita and the Sean Block—all just off Palawan.

The company also has interests in SC 41 Recto Bank Service and SC 53 in Mindoro.

In the financial services sector, Philodrill is a 40-percent shareholder of Penta Capital Investment Corp., an investment house. Penta Capital holds equity interest in several firms such as Penta Capital Finance Corp., Penta Capital Holdings Corp., Penta Capital Realty Corp. and Inter-Island Securities Inc.

In the mining sector, it holds minor equity interests in Atlas Consolidated Mining & Development Corp., Nickel Industries & Mining Corp., and United Paragon Mining Corp.

For Otto, Galoc oil flow provides 'solid margin'

AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH FIRM Bristol Securities Ltd. has reported that production rates at the Galoc oil field off Palawan are currently at $15-$20 a barrel, "providing solid margins at current oil prices."

Otto Energy Ltd. holds an 18.3-percent stake in the Galoc oil field, which is covered by Service Contract (SC) 14C.

Bristol said that oil production at the Galoc oil field was steady at 13,000 to 14,000 barrels a day, following the two-month downtime at the field.

The next crude offload of some 300,000 barrels is due sometime this week, it added.

According to Bristol, Otto Energy's debt of some 18 million Australian dollars will be settled using revenue generated from Galoc over the next three months.

Also, Bristol expects Otto Energy to be able to farm out its 60-percent stake in SC 55, covering a block off southwest Palawan, to a major party despite a lapse in an earlier agreement.

Bristol noted that while Otto Energy's agreement with SEP Billiton Petroleum Pty. Ltd. for the deepwater exploration block had not been extended, discussions were, however, still going on between the two firms.

It further said even if BHP's decision to terminate the agreement was "disappointing," Bristol remained confident that an agreement would be reached "albeit, on less favorable terms."

Based on preliminary seismic data, Otto Energy said the service contract area was estimated to contain 1.0 trillion cubic feet of gas and 367 million barrels of oil.

Amy R. Remo

CEBU PROPERTY VENTURES & DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of CEBU PROPERTY VENTURES & DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION will be held on WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2009 at 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon at Ballroom 1 & 2 of the Cebu City Marriott Hotel, Cebu City, with the following

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Determination of Quorum
3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Annual Stockholders' Meeting
4. Annual Report
5. Ratification of All Acts and Resolutions of the Board of Directors and Management
6. Election of Directors (including Independent Directors)
7. Election of Auditors and Approval of Remuneration
8. Consideration of such other business as may properly come before the meeting
9. Adjournment

Only stockholders of record at the close of business on March 16, 2009 shall be entitled to notice of, and to vote at, the meeting.

Makati City, March 4, 2009.

FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

RENATO R. OSIRO
Assistant Corporate Secretary

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Ideal for Holiday
Ideal for Christmas
Ideal for New Year
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Ideal for Father's Day
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Ideal for Wedding
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Ideal for Confirmation
Ideal for First Communion
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Editor Cesar D. Pangonorang

MIAS organizers defend China-made cars

By Tessa R. Salazar

FILIPINO MOTORISTS, ADMITTEDLY, have been so enamored with cars made only in the United States, Europe and Japan that any other reliable-running brand, nonetheless point of origin, receives from eyes-state suspicion, close bills of skepticism. Take, for example, the region-most of Korean carmaker Hyundai and Kia in the country. It wasn't a decade ago that Korean used cost were constantly being derided by the motoring public (and the press) as being cramped, of poor workmanship, and generally a nuisance to drive. But look where Kia and Hyundai are now. Those brands are obviously enjoying the respect and admiration of even the most powerful automobile critics in the country and the United States.

So, here in this equally eye-crazy land of ours, as Koreans can't rise into the higher echelons of motoring society, Asians now the newest wannabes. China-made cars. And they're counting on the market through a door that would guarantee easy sales—the entry-level market comprised of buyers who require only the barest essentials in cars.

That would be logical from a desirable sales standpoint, but Filipino motorists have "learned" not to move sophisticated machine (e.g. Toyota for Lexus; Hyundai, to Genesis). Subaru, which used to be an "econobox car" is now focused on more upscale models, and even entered high-cost SUVs. So, why is it in the economy category?

Chinese car manufacturers are more than willing to fill in the gap, and they're ready to take the Rob Roy route, with the territory, too. They've become "whipping boys" of auto (not unlike the lowly Pinoy DSS (fast acid tongued exhaustion) Chip Tate decided in his understated exhaustion, these cars seemed to be having "virtually priced and poorly made" (which sometimes begs the question: Which comes first, the chicken or the egg?). But, amazingly, Chinese-made cars are becoming more and more ubiquitous—and, in some results, with many first-time consumers buying them of Chery QQ subcompacts and Lifan brakes. Indeed, so like the Pinoy [illegible] reborn their Chinese brethren in ethos publicly [illegible] yet love become so indispensable to their existence in daily life.

It wasn't much of a surprise, then, that Chinese cars were so prominent at the Manila International Auto Show held April 2 to 5. Still, many visitors couldn't help but comment on what they considered the "cheap-looking light" MGM introduced upon the Chinese display.

Alvin Uy, an auto enthusiast and one of the organizers of MIAS, admitted that his group's decision to [illegible] made cars had been criticized by some quarters. But he defended MIAS' move.

"Years ago, (Chinese cars in auto shows) would have been unthinkable, but since consumers like Filipino consumers need peripheral components for Latin US to develop the class of their new model cars MPV, and other technologies are being rapidly purchased, obtained from Japanese Europeans and American companies design lines, therefore, the Chinese auto industry will be a force to reckon with in the coming years," Uy added.

Instead of praising Chinese companies that have been first plagiarizing technology and design to actually paying for them, some quarters choose to pull them down. Is this a sign of inferiority? I guess we can have a similar analogy during the early years of the Korean auto explosion," Uy said.

Joseph Ang, Wheelfest Services Int'l Incorporated, said the entry of Chinese-made cars in the local shores doesn't mean that the local market will be saturated with low-quality cheap knock-offs.

Focus on quality

According to Ang, the Chinese government has stiffened safety regulations and of-

CHINA-MADE cars like Great Wall's subcompact Florid may be up against a good will of skepticism.

fered other incentives to consider local car-market players. Ang said Nissan's leading executives no longer treat their competitors as cheap items. "Some of the Chinese-made cars at MIAS marked Great Wall Peri, Peri, MPV, Chery Hooligan Jr., Lifan 520, and the new Chery models."

Ang concluded, "I think everyone should welcome anyone who will work to promote the auto industry. I just feel Europe and Japan-owner cars days as an option, parasite and not a threat."

Next question: Will the Pinoy cheapie rider officers declare Chinese-made cars done a public apology? Hurry, Dr. Dayrit nothing.

New car 'sunscreen' introduced

By Charles E. Bolton

YOU JUST BOUGHT a car, and you don't need no sun to tell you about the hot than odds from accomplishing the usual suspects—getting a driver's license, securing insurance, etc.—you will take need than for your window's sun-down.

Seriously, being inside, as outback on those days is like driving a top down with the sun firmly boiling you with chocolate rays. Even some brands of UV rays could still pass through a clear glass window) as well as inflicted rays that could cause the tone, premature tanks your car to become unbearably hot.

Moreover, fuel consumption also increases since your car's air conditioner will have to work double or even triple time just to make you feel comfortable inside.

Many reasons

"Indeed, there are many reasons to tint your car. They act as sunscreen, protecting your skin from damaging rays, to making your car's interior up to 60 percent cooler during those very hot days," explained Joseph Chua, managing director of Luxtint, which recently introduced to the country Luxtint brand of automotive window films.

Chua said Luxtint is one the world's most respected brands of high-performance window films manufactured by Minnesota-based 3D Films Inc., the world's largest manufacturer of window film.

"We decided to give the market an even finer choice for their automotive window film requirement. While other films can very dark owing to achieve similar levels of heat rejection, Luxtint's retail screen film color for example, is light enough to meet visible light transmission laws worldwide as well as enable your driving in night driving situations," Chua said.

Another salient feature of Luxtint brand of automotive window film is its ability to protect occupant during accidents.

"Luxtint safety and security film provides a strong, protective barrier between the occupant and the glass in the event of an accident. Luxtint-equipped suburban cars will [illegible] but the glass fragments adhere to the film shielding occupants from dangerous flying glass shards...[which are] often the flying objects that could interfere with safe driving performance," Chua said.

Here the feature, even car thieves will be hampered from quickly stealing valuables inside the car.

"Because Luxtint-equipped windows would delay them and as a result, attract attention," he explained.

Slow access

Chua added that Luxtint safety and security film provide one from accomplishing their evil goals of attack, since the film would hold the broken glass in place, slowing access to the unlawful intruder.

"Moreover, if you are in the middle of traffic or an area, you'll have more time to escape," he added.

Chua said to ensure lasting quality, all Luxtint window films are professionally installed by their highly trained technicians.

"We only want to ensure quality and attention to detail in [illegible] customers. He concluded that they've made the best choice for their [illegible] investment," he said.

Pondering ponies

André Palma

ASK THE EVERYDAY MOTORISTS about their ideas on horsepower, and you'll likely get an answer (often not responses) from overpowered. One cannot fault their thought. What is their right mind would keep the technical definition of watts a commercially-pleased and effective transmission of mechanical measure in their heads?

Sadly, horsepower is more of just a marketing tool these days. It seems that every time a new car comes out, the horsepower numbers are increasing. Purchasers will claim class-leading figures in power. It is not surprising then that people are already hyped about the issue.

The sticky bit of the situation is that power does not matter. The amount of horses your engine can get done, by converting chemical energy into mechanical pickup and go, often makes the difference between cars that drive confidently and those that just merely power and storm ahead. At the end of the day, consumers should not have to be able to talk their snark power to an fast tongue.

The question must be asked of just how much power can touch on a daily basis. Will an extra five or 10 horses make an indelible impact on your driving? Probably not. The bare-a great majority of motorists in this metropolis do not and will not benefit from such a spin. In fact, good economy says that they'll never notice the difference in the first place.

Best solution

This brings us to the potential point that there are useful ranges of power for specific driving conditions. If would be so easy to say that having an easier road horse of so many car watts boosts the overall enjoyment of your vehicle on the road. Yet cost-wit thrifts in such de rigueur things as fuel efficiency and the impact on the environment, the idea of just having enough horsepower to get the job done becomes more appealing and responsible.

Car companies will argue with this but the bare minimum power one needs to drive in a congested city like Manila is well under 100 horsepower. The most painful arguments for less horsepower is when one is stuck in traffic-ravels in local urban areas. At an average of 30 kilometers per hour (kph) in the city with top speeds of 80 kph, small cars that don't weigh very much combine the lowly power-to-weight ratio with a low gear ratio to provide a lot of torque. Torque is the twisting force that gets the car moving. Cars with a lot of torque can accelerate quickly from a standstill.

Cars with a lot of torque can accelerate quickly from a standstill. Cars with a lot of torque can accelerate quickly from a standstill. Cars with a lot of torque can accelerate quickly from a standstill.

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BUSINESS

Filipinos upbeat, but spending less

Budget restricted to necessities

By Abigail L. Ho

WHILE THE MAJORITY OF FILIPINOS ARE relatively optimistic about the economy, many still choose to focus on the most prudent role by cutting back on their spending, particularly for items and services considered luxury.

According to a recent poll by market research firm Synovate, 43 percent of Metro Manila-based Filipinos believe that the economy is worst but expect that it will improve soon.

Unlike their counterparts in the United States, Japan and France—more than 60 percent of whom believe their economies are going downhill—only 20 percent of Filipinos have this same outlook.

"Filipinos definitely have a more positive outlook on the economy when compared with bigger markets," Synovate Philippines managing director Carole Santhos said yesterday in a statement.

The 1,000-person Metro Manila poll formed part of Synovate's global "State of the Economy" survey, which involved respondents ranging in age from 15-64 across 48 countries/markets.

Despite the Filipinos' relatively optimistic view of the economy, however, the survey revealed that 92 percent of the Metro Manila residents polled had reduced their spending.

First to go are high-tech gadgets (28 percent) and expensive appliances (16 percent) such as plasma TV sets, followed by leisure travel (14 percent) and restaurant meals (11 percent).

The survey further showed that as many as 61 percent of those polled had made less "impulse purchases," choosing to just spend for basic necessities such as food and utilities.

"We found that Filipinos were not the only ones to cut back, as comparisons with other Asian markets showed that people from Malaysia, Japan and Taiwan also shared the same sentiment," Santhos said.

The survey showed that Filipinos are also paying more attention on food prices now, with most of those surveyed saying they have started to compare prices of similar products before buying.

"Interestingly enough, more than half (53 percent) said that they have resorted to eating more food at home in case prices go up," Santhos said.

Even bigger things have taken a back seat due to the economic downturn, according to the survey.

Around 66 percent of those polled admitted that they have decided to postpone getting married, having children, moving to a new home, changing jobs and pursuing higher education in view of what's now happening to the global economy.

These life-changing decisions might have been made due to the fear of 69 percent of those surveyed of job and household income loss.

"It's evident that the current economic situation has impacted the lives of everyday Pinoys, but in spite of this worrying trend, the people we interviewed were generally determined and upbeat, with over three quarters (80 percent) agreeing that they will always find a way to afford some items that make them feel good," Santhos said.

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LIFESTYLE Home & Entertaining

Chocolate egg centerpiece

A clear container—sliced glass vase, champagne flute, wine glass or ice cream coupe—can be filled to the brim with moist chocolate eggs and other confections. Top them off with painted egg.

For color, tie ribbons, paper twine or raffia around the container.

Decorating with eggs

HERE ARE SOME DIY TIPS for a stylish celebration using eggs.

DECORATING C3

Do-it-yourself

With Anton Barreiro and Marina Gupa

D.I.Y.

Designer eggs

Our DIY gurus Antonio, Andy, and Jessica Fuerzlla show how easy it is to decorate eggs. Use colored markers to draw your favorite patterns and designs. It's less of a mess than using watercolor or poster paint, and the markers dry on the surface instantly so no smudging and dripping.

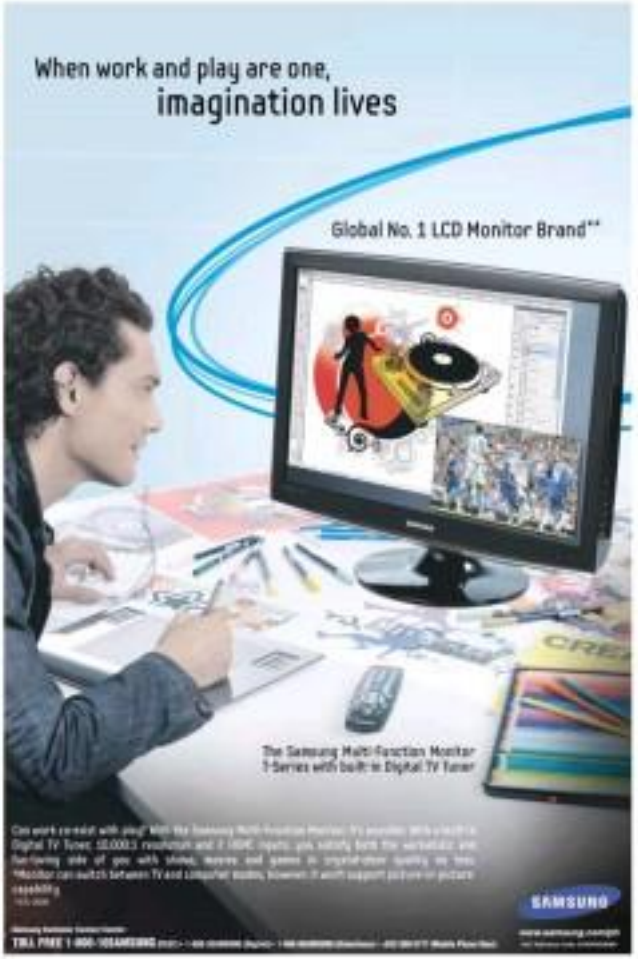
Bobby Mañosa designs 'green' townhouse

By Margo C. Enriquez
Contributor

READ THE HOT HOT PRESS releases on development projects that hype on green living; many play up the eco-chic project homes will be surrounded by verdant landscape. But the important concern is—where are the no-nonsense green building tenets of using energy-efficient material and technology and reducing disruption of the environment?

Mañosa & Properties, a spin-off of architect Francisco "Bobby" Mañosa's design firm, has launched the country's first luxury townhouse development that follows the ideals of green building, from design to construction. Lantern Lane in New

BOBBY C3



HOT NAMESDROPPABLES. Pag-Ibig fund president and CEO Lawyer Ramona V.S. Quimbo, GA president and CEO Ovidio Lee, Vice President Noli De Castro and Mandaluyong Mayor Marlene "Bedong" Morales about to cut the ribbon for the launch of the GA Xevera Mabalacat model houses

ALEXANDER Caagulran

COVERBOYS Jun Watts, John Cuenca, Zanjoe Marudo, Rafael Rosell and Victor Basa

PAMPANGA. Ina Olivarez, Rep. Carmelo Lazatin and director Mimiano Rep. Rodolfo Valencia

GA CFO Quincee Lee

2SA 2SA Puello, Gary Valenciano, Charice Pempengco, Kuyda and Jed Madela

Globe Asiatique introduces the good life with Xevera Mabalacat

TALENTED designers Amanda Lumibao and Jake Tracy Cruz with GA vice president for sales and marketing Divina Lee

FOLLOWING THE SUPER-SUCCESSful Xevera Riverine housing project, Globe Asiatique recently unveiled its new dream project, Xevera Mabalacat. With a remarkable amount of just P788,000 at the already refined interest rate of seven percent, and payable in, take note, palugit, 30 years with Pag-Ibig, "anyone can own a unit at a fixed incredibly amortization rate of only P4,027.71," Nico Said, kids!

A whole city bunch for the city's residents was held, with the gates opening to the new plaza, transformed into a giant theme park. Before the ribbon-snipping, fireworks, school and music bosses were blessed and turned over to the town of Mabalacat, Pampanga. GA Foundation managing director Gina Lopez and Xev Mabalacat E-Media led the turnover of the school.

As the clock struck 11, the launch went full blast with the singing of the popular Sunday variety show "SOAP" and a grand parade. There were colorful floats and a motorcade featuring ABS-CBN's hot young stars, plus an international hip-hop dance group. The big actor anchors.

The highlight had Sarah Geronimo and the Ultimate Showstoppers Pinky Pinoy(a) strutting the grinding, swooning crowd. Tasty tarts, palangges.

The Xevera Mabalacat launch was just a dash of the good life that residents will soon enjoy, palangges, thanks to Globe Asiatique Realty and Holding Co.

Mentes Fit sizzles

As usual, palangges, you can expect tons of fun and sizzling action when Mentes Fit does toss summer with the awesome "Beach Volley National Circuit: Off Start of Summer Party," held this year at the SM Mall of Asia Bay Area.

"From beach-stopping beach volley games to sizzling personalities, Mentes Fit has got everything covered to make sure that this summer is one for the memories," said Mentes vice president and Nestea consumer marketing manager Tina Samaco. She was joined by Nestea brand activation executive Shantelle Chuacoshing and Nestea category manager Yeth Enriquez.

We were shown cool beach wear by female sexy-bomb designer PJ Arabelle with its Hot and Fit Body of Work Collection. Hot models hurl the catwalk debut, while guest teammates and TV personalities Pete Rosales and Nika Jose looked absolutely sexy. Ahhhmy.

The series included a concert headlined by top French Ayo(a)(ntin), Pinoybands and Sandwich, plus beach volleyball games and hip-hop classes.

Lines stop for Xevera is the Pedestall to Mandaluyo City Cebu, from April 16-18, and D'Mall D'Bacolod, from May 6-8. Visit www.xevera.com.ph for more information.

Scores for life

The awesome Pink For Life Foundation has been providing subsidized chemotherapy treatments for women with stage one and two breast cancer. This foundation has helped over 200 women in Luzon cope with the high financial burden of the disease by paying 75 percent of the chemotherapy medication.

"This year, the Foundation hopes to extend the benefits of the program to the Visayas and Mindanao," explained Philippine Tatler and Harrison Plaza's mastermind of millionaire, lawyer Ni Fernandez-Addleger.

Internationally renowned brand Beach has always been involved in civic endeavors to help the less fortunate. This time, it developed two fragrances, called "Bank and Inspire," to help the foundation. These can be toiletries are made with oils from Grasse, in the South of France, palangges. Part of the sales will go directly to PINK for Life Foundation.

The launching took place during a cocktail event attended by lots of personalities, at the society soiree of the chic store Glorietta 5.

Needless to say, palangges, I couldn't help but notice the happy faces of the creators behind this much needed cause. Go and check out this inspired and inspiring event.

Donations are also accepted at any BDO branch. Under account name, please indicate Pink for Life Foundation Inc. Current Account: 004-480-0002000-7.

Fillet second season

Fresh from the success of its maiden season (10 seasons in one year), the Fillet Entertainment Foundation, led by the multitalented Moby Zubiri, is all set to inspire, educate and delight the Metro south with its second season of performances beginning April 25. The shows, to be held at Insular Life Theater Alabang, are co-sponsored by the Insular Life Assurance Company.

The season will see the participation of the world-class Philippine Opera Company, Sonya Florence Manila, PEAsiaticaBA Orchestra and Clarion Chamber Ensemble. Soloists include clarinetist Marian Liebenstein, marimbist Dana Stefanidis, pianist Arlen Castro and guitarists Perfecto de Castro and Ruben Reyes.

The inaugural gala of "Of Emperors and Cases," set for April 25, will present violinist battle Tenors and cellist Gluncardo Gonzales, plus the Philharmonik's conducted by Leonard Santiago.

Call 0916-8439474, 0918-6436472 or to receive a copy of the Pillow Weekly Bulletin, e-mail filletfoundation@yahoo.com.

DEPED Region III Director Maria Ramirez, E-Media Program Director Zen Hernandez and DepEd Asst. Secretary Jesse Mairo

MGA LIT Djemal, moi, Karen Davila and Ariana Mendiola

POPULAR TV personality Korina Sanchez

GLAM girl Vicky Zubiri and singing sensation Christian Bautista

THE TALENTEDS behind the fantastic Pink For Life Foundation: Maria Katigbak with Squibb Djemal, Irene Marcel Francisco, Ben Chan, Dr. Vicki Belo, Mona Tantoco and Dr. Diana Cua-Bautista

AHB. ISABEL Cara Wilson with Mila Wales, Rafael and Janis Sy, Dr. Diana Cua-Bautista and Chloe Portigal

NYMPHA Valencia and PAL's Babsie Aragon

LAURE Tan with Nini Lizarza, Juana Tantoco and Chipsi Morales

AR TICZON with Portia Santos, Dr. Randy Francisco, Chinkee and Ophie Chanyungco

GORGEOUS gals Maja Salvador, Anne Curtis, Iya Villania and Shaina Magdayao perform a colorful Latin number.

THE HOSTESS gang that will make your summer sizzle with tons of fun: category manager Yeth Enriquez, brand activation executive Ronnie Chuacoshing, Nestle vice president and Nestea consumer marketing manager Tina Samaco, Nestle marketing, promotions and events head Ruth Novales and Nestle SVP and business executive manager for beverages Dennis Anonuevo

HOT CELEBRITIES Pete Rosales and Nika Jose

SANDWICH lead vocalist Raimund Marasigan

SIMPLE of Asia's young and smart marketing officer Paul Talavera

"SURVIVOR Philippines" winner JC Tiuseco

BORACAY-BASED designer PJ Arabelle

GERARD Salonga

Egg nest

Cotton vines and long roots, twirl them into shape or they form nests. Spread down around the table and lay assorted eggs. There are great accents around. Basic arrangements and best of all, the hard-boiled eggs can be eaten so nothing goes to waste.

Decorating with eggs

Egg garden

A fantastic table decor that's easy to do. All you need is a basket.

Place floral foam inside and insert grass-like leaves.

To cover the edge of the basket in your portions of the foam are exposed, twirl a string of vines around to use pin, pin violas or braided ribbons.

Nestle eggs on top. We used an assortment of eggs: fresh organic eggs, ostrich eggs and quail eggs.

This is a nice way to prevent the eggs in the kids before painting and decorating them.

Photographs by A

Ribbon accent

Take a hard-boiled egg and wrap colored ribbons around it. Leave printed ribbons with plain-colored ones, or play around with lace and beaded ensembles. Accent with mini lanterns and artistic flowers. These decorated eggs can be nestled on napkins or bar them out on the table as additional decor.

Bobby Mañosa designs 'green' townhouse

Homepage C3

Manila, Quezon City in a 36-unit, triple-detached and townhouse project that balances Filipino style and modern function while reducing the carbon footprint.

Francisco "Tito" Mañosa Jr. (TG), established this service company which provides real estate development and management services. He saw his father's business with other developers who would knock down the architect's ideas to cut costs. Invariably, the design would merely be a box, instead of a house imbued with the architect's environmentfriendly trademarks.

Pre-based

The youngest Mañosa and the Green Communities Criteria for home affordable projects. He points out that building a green home begins with an integrated design approach.

Usually developers concentrate on architecture and later cut the execution to a contractor. Developers plunge into a project after redrawn and to the end. On top of that, contractors tend to execute the architect's ideas without considering additional costs for the owners.

As development manager, Mañosa explains that their company gets only 10 percent of the total cost. "If you send a house and have a budget of P30 million but don't have the time, we can take care of everything. I will charge 20 percent which is part of the P30 million," he says. "Our service is for friends, service and at no profit. Everything is direct cost."

A contingency fee of half a million pesos covers unexpected expenses or price inflation. "What's not money is left is retained. We already made our fees as professionals," says Mañosa.

While the house is in the drawing board, Mañosa's company collaborates with the architect, interior designers, contractor, green consultant, engineers, landscape architect, owners, marketing and sales, manager association and government. The synergy of these ideas not only keeps costs in control but also results in a unified look.

'Bahay kubo'

As a green project, Lantana Lane is also site-sensitive. Mañosa explains this according to Filipino-Chinese classic, Nine Mansions and Geomantic are located in the dragon's belly according to geomancy, a location which attracts good fortune. The land itself was graybeld, a term for an underutilized property, inherited from Mañosa's scattered grandmother.

Unlike other developments where the main road inevitably becomes a parking lot for guests, each unit will have a two-car parking garage and two more slots for guests.

Nearly 400 sq.m. each house is three-storeys high with a penthouse on the top floor, four bedrooms and quarters for the maid and drivers, and six bathrooms. A finished unit is P10.3 million while a base unit, where the owners prefers to provide the finishes, is P7.5 million. Houses with an additional garden finish P7.9 million to P11.7 million.

Each unit is built on a passive system which lessens waste of construction materials by 30 percentage. A construction waste management program will recycle construction debris.

The house embodies architect Bobby Mañosa's trademarks which are based on bahay kubo elements: cross ventilation on front and back windows that facilitate passage of air and light; orientation of the house to the elements; high ceiling and judicious use of local materials such as bamboo. Other green design elements are rainwater harvesting and recharging from that provide are properties for tools for possible solar panels and aluminum clad windows with tinting that filter the sun.

Lower utility bills

The insulated exterior walls protect the house from the heat and maintain the coolness in the interiors. The interiors are non-toxic paints and adhesives that help contribute to a healthy environment. Exhaust fans in the kitchens and bathrooms reduce moisture condensation to prevent molds and help remove carbon monoxide from appliances.

Each home will be equipped with a 200-gallon rainwater harvest system which collects water from the roof. The stored water can be used for flushing toilets and watering plants.

The landscaping and native white management provide green benefits, which in turn also cut down the utility bills.

Instead of a sealed cement floor which absorbs and transmits heat, the property is landscaped with grass pavers and paving blocks which have holes that let the water sink back into the ground. This provides a natural cooling system.

"Ultimately you will live in a house with a passive cooling system and don't rely dependent on air-conditioning. It will be more efficient to run and therefore, cheaper on your bills. Your carbon footprint is much lower than your neighbor in another development. It's beneficial to the health of the end user."

For details, call 4927000 and 6420871.

ARCHITECT Bobby Mañosa and CEO Dino Mañosa

SINGLE detached unit has overhanging floors that roof to solar panelling, plants on an upstairs.

TOP floor penthouse deck has a flat roof that serves as a terrace and possible solar panels.

New aircon induces sleep

Samsung's Vivaldi adjusts to one's skin temperature

FIRE RETARDANT

There's a fire-retardant product on the market. Flame Shield is a liquid fire retardant that is applied on wood, curtains, bedspreads, carpets and other combustible materials in closed areas. In short, it's an added protection against the combustibility of flammable materials. It's made by Paradise Chemicals Inc., a building paint manufacturer. For inquiries, call 8810091, 8127267 or visit www.paradisechem.com.

By Anna A. Jamboro

THE SKIN NEEDS TO BE AT 34.8-35.3 degrees Celsius for the body to feel relaxed, according to studies at the Eindhoven University in Brabant, Holland. This is especially critical when one is sleeping.

In Samsung, a brand that began in Korea but has now become global, has developed an air-conditioner that determines a person's skin temperature, and keeps the temperature for the better part of the three-deep stages to ensure optimum rest.

Named Vivaldi, the basic split-type air-conditioner is compact and slim with delicate features.

"Samsung has called an intelligent microchip into the system so that it can determine the skin temperature while the machine is running," said Brian S. Bolejon, system product officer, Consumer Electronics, Samsung Electronics Phils. Corp.

There are three stages of sleep: falling asleep, sound sleep and waking up. In the first stage, Bolejon explained, the body must drop two degrees from the comfort zone so as to cool down and become relaxed. After an hour the temperature gradually increases until the "plateau"—skin temperature is reached, and then the sound-sleep stage is achieved.

"If the data stays in the same temperature for an extended period you'd keep on waiting up in the middle of the night because it's too cold or you need to use the toilet," he said.

After seven hours of continuous operation, the temperature will slightly rise to gently rouse the body to a new day. Bolejon said studies have also shown that a little perspiration stirs the body to wake up.

All these features at a click of a button called Good Sleep II Mode.

Energy saver

Vivaldi is an energy saver. Typical air-conditioners work the compressor—the heart of the machine—at once full capacity of 80-100 percent. When it reaches this zone, the AC system goes up huge amounts of energy to keep it going.

While this energy saver, Vivaldi maintains the room's cool temperature while working the compressor at a minimum level: 50-60 percent. This saves electricity of up to 35 percent.

"Vivaldi is lightweight and compact but the capacity for cooling is the same as heavy ones with the heat-conditioning blade," said Bolejon.

A dehumidification shield instantly absorbs humidity in a room. Cooling is on a pleasant temperature is achieved faster (7 minutes max) and maintaining room temperature will not overwork the system, providing it's the right size for the room.

Vivaldi split-type air-conditioner

How to measure the right size for the room

ALL ACs HAVE A COOLING capacity number in BTU per hour. Each square meter will be cooled down by 500 BTU. Obviously, the size of the room by 500 BTU to determine the right size.

For example, 24 sq.m. x 500 BTU = 12,000 BTU is 1.5-horsepower AC would be perfect.

"The AC consumes most energy when the compressor is on. When the AC is too small for a room the compressor must keep on working hard to keep the room cool," said Christopher Pondi, head, air-conditioner group, Samsung Electronics Phils. Corp.

Tip(1) the ideal consideration for bedrooms, Pondi said. For master rooms like dining and kitchen areas, one needs to increase the number of BTU to 1,000 per square metres. When in doubt, Pondi advises consumers to have their place inspected by a specialist before making any AC purchase.

Interestingly Vivaldi also has silver-coated pre-filters where the filter is coated with silver to prevent bacteria and viruses from emitting to the filter. The multi-step air-purifying system has a deodorizing catechin filter, silver-coated filter, ABS resin and silver-coated evaporator.

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DESIGNER SPACE

Lustico styles his 20-sq m office space

MAAYO sculpture by Yenko Cuenco

With big mirrors to create illusion of space, it doubles as fitting room

DOWNS Lustico does his sketches on a long-armatured table and chair in wenge from Old Asia. Behind are paintings by Ivan Acuña and Muñoz.

By Alex P. Vergara

DESIGNER DENNIS LUSTICO admits that his office (20 sq m) and production area in Makati, a two-story affair, have become quite small for his thriving business. But due to practical as well as sentimental reasons, he's kept the place.

"This is my first ever shop since I decided to go on my own 10 years ago," says Lustico, one of today's favorite designers in the country's elite, a designer acclaimed for both his design and craftsmanship. "It has become quite synonymous for me and my clients to meet here."

The shop, especially Lustico's office, may be small, but the place has managed to remain orderly. By carefully selecting the pieces that make up his work area, the designer creates an eclectic look with rubric

Lustico at

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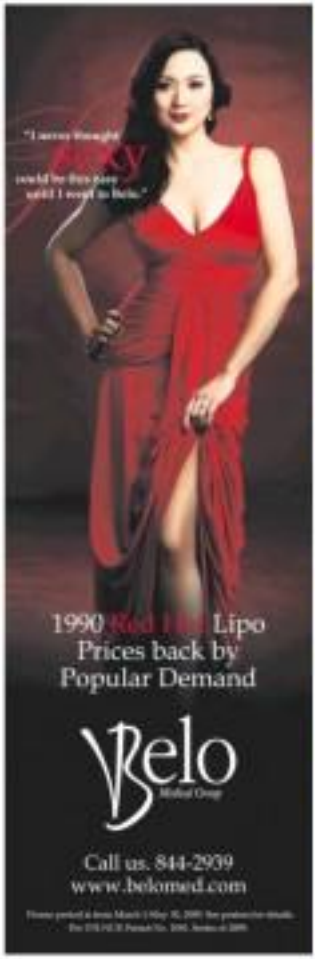

ANGELITA Balauitan

Angel sees a bright future—incredibly

Born blind, she has her eye on a web design career

By Joy Bajo
Contributor

LIKE MOST 21-YEAR-olds, Angelita Balauitan can spend an entire day seated in front of a computer, uploading photos on her friends' accounts, downloading love songs by Sarah Geronimo and Regine Velasquez, checking out the latest videos on YouTube, and chatting with whoever happens to be online at the time.

Typing effortlessly on a keyboard, Balauitan is in her element. Until she asks one question that reveals a most remarkable fact about her.

"Ma'am?" she asks shyly. "Before po ba ng presentation?"

It's difficult to describe what she says "yes," as Balauitan has been blind since birth—the result, she says, of a deficiency in Vitamin A and her mestiza mother being blind herself.

"I don't know what 'light' and 'darkness' are," says Balauitan, speaking in Tagalog. "Because everything is 'normal' to me."

Cruel

In Davao where she was born and raised, the next to an exclusive school for the visually impaired during her elementary years. In high school, however, Balauitan and seven other blind students experienced how cruel the world could be when they joined a regular school.

Though she was good in subjects that required memorization, the only other blind student was exempted from activities that needed sight ("So we weren't graded and didn't have anything," she recalls). Quizzes and tests were doubly hard for Balauitan answering in Braille, they would dictate her answers to an extra for teachers who didn't know how to read Braille.

"I take memories when I was talking to my boyfriend sometimes," she says. "When I didn't get a response, I reached his chair and realized he wasn't there anymore."

Despite her visual impairment, Balauitan had an instant affinity with computers, which she learned to use in elementary (the mastered use of the keyboard in 6th grade).

In 6th grade, she went to Manila for the first time to attend a two-week computer course in IBM, after high school, she signed up for a five-six-month computer course in Davao (the most subtle in exercise of challenges.

"I was the only blind student in class, all my classmates were deaf, so when the instructor was explaining, it was so quiet!" she says with a laugh.

Nevertheless, our teacher was enough patience to her to recommend her to ADRDV (Adaptive Technology for Rehabilitation, Inspiration and Empowerment of the Visually Impaired) Computer School for the Blind in Cubao, Quezon City.

Full scholar

Balauitan, who has been in ADRDV's care since she arrived in Manila in July 2007, is a full scholar of the Asia-Pacific College in Magallanes where she's a freshman in an associate degree in Computer Technology.

ADRDV Head's Job Acosta with Ipsenik, a special software program for the visually impaired that translates text to speech, explains Balauitan's confidence with the computer—and the reason she is the king in a school of more or sighted students.

"Last semester, she had a 3.1 average," reports ADRDV training and employment director Carol Gonzales proudly. "Her teachers from upon their semester literacy class, they're in ADRDV they learn about life."

Indeed, while Balauitan appears every inch the shy and fragile petite doyen, she is also, Gonzales observes, "never down-mood and talks more."

More just as comfortable with sighted students, she likes to hang out with them at the mall, or at the pool of the condominium where a classmate lives.

"Sa Enchanted Kingdom?" she answers when asked what else she'd want like to visit.

While she had to reschedule her at the moment, the idea of having her own family someday actually excites her. "Gusto, pantay-pantay po ba?" she exclaims enthusiastically.

Balauitan, who hasn't been with her mother, stepfather and twin, five-year-old brothers since the last time in Davao in October 2007, says, "I would like to experience having a whole family of my own."

If she could be blessed with vision, what's the first thing she'd like to see?

Balauitan, who has her eye on a career in web design and development, doesn't mention a popular website or the name of a famous actor. Instead, she says with a broad smile, "My mother."

ADRDV Computer School for the Blind was chosen by Samsung Hope, a charity initiative of Samsung, as one of three beneficiaries of its latest social responsibility campaign.

'Songs for a New World' opens May 1

IO MORES THEATRICAL, Manila's newest theater company, presents the much-celebrated musical "Songs for a New World" at the Carlos P. Romulo Theater, BGHC Plaza, Makati City, May 1, 2, 8, 9, 10.

"Songs for a New World" is by Tony Award-winning composer and lyricist Jason Robert Brown. Noted theater actor and director Nathan Hawkins, co-founder and artistic director of 9 Works Theatrical, will direct the musical show after a successful one-night run last August 24, 2008.

"Songs For A New World" features Felix Rivera, Cris Bonifacio, Anna Sanmartin, Harold Cruz, Carla Guevara-Laforteza and Pinky Marquez.

For tickets and inquiries, call 557-5609/0906-3339951, 844-8870/0916-2262554, 0917-8125889 or 891-9999. Visit http://www.bettercurtain.com/9_Works_Theatrical/Get_Tickets.html

One of a kind

By Liz S. Bernardo

THE ALABANG TOWN CENTER CERTAINLY HAS many finds. One of them is a home store called Store One. This is a shop I often pass by just to see what's new. It is always a treat to see an one-of-a-kind creation that are sure to be the focal point of any home. My favorites are the big lounging lumps of which I already have two in my own home.

This time around I spotted newer lumps in much larger and more unique shapes, a one-of-a-kind bubble chair and oddical bed.

A HUGE ROOM chair or a bubbly chair, either way, this piece of furniture will surely be the focal point in any luxurious living room.

QUEEN-SIZE central bed, a great choice for newlyweds and for newly-young couples here, at Store One.

ONE-OF-A-KIND ceiling lamps and floor lamps

STORE One at G/L, Alabang Town Center

THE SHOP'S receiving area leads to his office.

LUSTICO in his office-living room. Two huge mirrors are placed opposite each other to create the illusion of space.

Lustico styles his 20-sq m . . .

From page B1

touches of Orientalia.

A number of accent pieces and artworks were gifts from friends such as Interiors Lifestyle's contributing beauty editor Ria Francisco-Ortiz, one of Lustico's "brides," who gave him an Ivan Acuña painting.

The alternate piece and an oil painting by Marbella, which Lustico bought in a nearby gallery, now adorn the walls adjacent to his workstation.

To achieve an illusion of space, he positioned a pair of huge mirrors on opposite walls. The smaller of the two is a gift from colleague Frederick Peralta.

"My office doubles as living room, so three mirrors are perfect," he says.

Other noteworthy details include a brass sculpture of a ballerina by Perdie Cuesta and several decorative lanterns given to him by make-up artist Patrick Ross.

He also went for smaller statement pieces—from his foreign-tipped wood table and chair from Old Asia to a pair of mango cabinets from Cap Gigot. The latter pieces, also in wood with light-colored wood inlay, were custom-built for the limited space.

Lustico's fascination with Islamic and Asian art and traditional women such as Carmel Snow and Diana Vreeland is evident in the collectable books he avails. There and a number of other titles are placed atop an upright cabinet resembling cells of lockers.

The shop's production area has two rooms. Lustico shares the second floor with interiors and curtains, who occupy a bigger room, while his furniture and beaders work on the ground floor.

Despite having grown attached to the place, Lustico may move out to a more spacious location. He will still have space for his office.

"I certainly could use the extra space to practice my ballet," he's just kidding.

LUSTICO loves to mix real plants with statement pieces such as this walnut cabinet with wood inlay by Cap Gigot.

Writing workshop

Tower Book House holds a writing workshop for children aged 8-12. Classes are divided according to specialized levels of participants. The workshop includes techniques in discovering one's writing style, strengthening one's style and applying this style in creative non-fiction presentation. From style, the workshop tackles essay writing, feature writing, journalism, short story writing and playwriting. Basic shall be on school submission of works which shall be published. Call 911-5802 or 911-5803, e-mail children@towerbooks.com or go to Woodner Tower, 1601 Legaspi St., Legaspi Village, Makati.

Culinary courses

First Southeast Academy is now accepting applicants for its diploma courses. Classes start May 4. First Southeast Academy is at Capitol Green III, Capitol Hills Drive, Old Balara, Quezon City. Call 981-1687 and 981-0800 or 0908-2582826. E-mail info@firstsoutheastacademy.com.

Hotel promo

Check in with the whole family for only P5,000 net for a superior room and chill by the pool to enjoy activities at Diamond Hotel Philippines. Your accommodation also includes breakfast buffet for two, complimentary mini bar, free Internet access in the room's and lobby, valued charges for in-room calls and complimentary use of the swimming pool for four adults and two kids. Stay another night or get another room for a discounted rate of P4,000 net, exclusive of breakfast. Supercard Room promos run from June 15. Call 5250000, e-mail fairwaterfd@diamondhotel.com.

WOFEX Visayas

The Association of Food Industries, Manufacturers and Exporters Inc. exhibitors will host the WOFEX Visayas scheduled April 23-25 at the Cebu International Convention Center, in Mandaue City, Cebu. Call 8256796/8, 8256033, 8256782 or 8256156, e-mail info@wofex.org or log on to www.

Kite flying

Handymanjuana holds a fun with the Kite downstairs of the Philippines for Dummies Kite Flying from a whole day of kite-taking, kite flying and other outdoor activities for the whole family. It is called on April 19, at the Area at Fresco Parking Area of Bonifacio, Mandaluyong.

National Convention

The Philippine College of Gerontology and Geriatrics will be conducting its 14th Annual National Convention on April 25 at the Century Park Hotel, Makati, Manila. The theme this year's convention is Building Bridges: Bridging Gaps: Optimizing Health, Excellent Elderly Care. The convention will be held 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Call 911-5800002, 0917-3264 Mon 521000.

Lecture on weaving

The UP Sarge Museum (UPSM) will host a lecture by Dr. Marian Rongales on April 25, 10 a.m., at the lobby of the museum. Dr. Rongales's discussion will focus on the active weaving centers of the Philippines and its current status, history of weaving in the country and some of the weaving implements and/or materials used to create textiles with innovative designs and patterns. Admission is free. Call 928-1827 or e-mail upgmuseum@gmail.com.

Metro Manila's new 'gated' communities

IS IT LEGAL TO BAR ACCESS TO city or national roads?

Many said more people are beginning to ask this question as many streets in Makati and Manila are now closed to motor vehicles for several hours at night. One exasperated taxi driver who found himself blocked by baseline police in Makati side streets every midnight now he learned one night last week, exclaimed: "Hindi na mas nakikilusot ito, e."

In the San Isidro Bukid area of Manila, they even have gates made of steel bars to close certain roads. I gathered that these access were authorized by barangay residents. My own barangay has become a true gated community, despite the fact it remains primarily an area of rented apartments and houses. Two tall iron doors are supposed to be closed from midnight to about 4 a.m. under a barangay resolution.

The reasons why people ask about the legality of these resolutions is because public roads, whether national or city, are concerned with taxpayers' money. And that means, for national roads, all taxpaying Filipinos, and for city roads, all taxpaying Makati or Manila residents. Taxpayers can very asked or openly how and where they want their money used to it may be assessed part of the money they give the government goes to road and bridge construction anywhere and everywhere.

Every conscientious of Makati and Manila could take to the concerning, repair and maintenance

THE CONSUMER
Linda B. Bolido

of city roads every time they shop, dine or do business in city establishments or they have to pay all kinds of taxes. So they may also be considered part owners of those roads.

I cannot imagine who do not live on those streets should start demanding that the money they pay to the city should only go to roads where they have unhampered access. On the other hand, those barangays that close off roads should spend their own money to pay for the repair and maintenance of those streets. But is that. Why should people pay for things to which they are denied access, even if he only a few hours every night? Private subdivisions can deny use of their roads because they pay for those themselves such is not rely on public funds.

Questions for water companies

Residents of La Metropole condominium on H.V. de la Costa corner Tordesillas Sts., Salcedo Village in Makati are asking the Manila Water Co. Inc. why they are charged commercial, rather than residential, rates. Lauderdale Gozales, president of La Metropole Condominium Corp., said in her letter to this column that Manila Water "unilaterally declared all the units in condo buildings have 'dalawang tubig' as subject to commercial rather than residential water rates, just because there are units on the ground floor which happen to be commercial establishments."

Gozales said condo charters specified that some 90 pro cent of units in these buildings should be solely for residential purposes, which is why they find Manila Water's policy unfair.

I passed on Chris' complaint, which I got in December, to Maria la Vitore but have not received a reply until now.

A reader, who asked not to be identified, has a question for the other water company, Maynilad. He wants to know why Maynilad is making them pay for its pipelaying. "Isn't that part of their investment?" he asks. The reader says "they are making customers shoulder these capital expenses and that is on top of the terrible rates for they will be charging us." He says Maynilad is circulating the sort of pipe-laying by the members of residents in their community, and each customer will pay the sum to 40 months, which will be added to the monthly water bills.

The reader says Maynilad should naturally be giving customers rebates for using their money in laying down the infrastructure for the better service in word of competent roads.

Send letters to The Consumer, Lifestyle Section, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 1000 Chino Roces Ave. cor. Mascardo and Yague Sts., 1204 Makati City; fax 897-8703-94; or e-mail lbolido@inquirer.com.ph

QUAPO Quinta Market's Baliwag Ng Taloy aisle

Quinta: From lamps to angel's wings

Whether you're a yuppie decking your pad or mom frantic for costume, this market can pull you in

By Jake Maderazo
Contributor

RIVERS ARE A VERY IMPORTANT part of a country's economic activities. Great cities lie alongside mighty rivers. Pasig Rivers runs from the mouth of Laguna de Bay and snakes through various towns and cities until it empties out into Manila Bay. At the end of Pasig lies one of the oldest marketplaces in Manila, Quinta Market. It sits on the line of Quezon Bridge and is not far from Quiapo Church.

Here, one finds items from furnishings to clothes. Under Quezon Bridge, popularly known as "Baliwag ng taloy," are stalls selling Philippine-made products, from crafts, basketwork, home items, gift boxes to Capiz lamps.

I started going to this place when I was in high school and the "buying" budgets were the major among us students. Quinta items come from all over, from upland Binangan to lowland Laguna.

When I needed items to counter my own source-style pad, I had great finds at Quinta, including a hanging capiz chandelier and spherical capiz lamps. Neither in any place can I help but notice them; a friend even asked me to buy one for her spa in Singapore.

I also bought bamboo made of woven bamboo and leaves as well, and used them to organize my underpinnings.

Echague, Hidalgo

Along Echagüe Street fronting Quinta, stores such as Manilaville and Echagüe Trading are selling curiosities ranging from Snow White to Cinderella. Even Dio and new Disney characters such as Bolt and Ariel, the Little Mermaid.

Wings in various forms and materials, from white feathers for angels to colorful plastic for fairies, are also being sold.

Egyptian headdresses, cosmos and masks under Rome could also be ordered in case a dance troupe is in need of a dance pair.

For costume parties, the stores have various animal furry outfits, from pig to chick down to a mouse.

Echagüe is also home to the famous Binondo Quiapo hats.

Among headdress and various photographers, Bishop Street is well-known for its photography supplies, from tripods to lenses.

A pedestrian friend, who is into beadwork and fashion accessories, visits Modern market once Quinta Market for inexpensive stones—coral, pearls and seashells.

For those looking for inexpensive frames for paintings and photographs, Quiapo has many frame workshops.

Now that ADB-CBN Foundation received the movement to clean Pasig River, maybe efforts could start with reviving and resuscitating Quinta Market and adjoining Muslim dwelling areas.

Quinta, a landmark from for your centuries, should be restored.

WIRO vases made of reed

COLORFUL light bulbs

SOMBRERONG BAKA, horn's cups and other Filipiniana dresses

PIÑA-HE supplies more

HANGING lamps made of capiz and seashell at various designs

eyed peas
hot chili peppers
floyd
and lemons
day

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LIFESTYLE Parenting

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What it feels like to be a 'ping-pong kid'

They called it shared custody, I called it a pain in the ass

By Martha Sarmen
Contributor

MY PARENTS SEPARATED when I was 12, during the summer before I started high school. "Why?" is a hard question to answer. She didn't have another man, he didn't beat her up. They just really couldn't get along.

I remember feeling bad for my classmates who came from broken homes. But all of a sudden, I was one of them. All of a sudden, I was a "ping pong kid."

Ping-pong kids. That's what I called us—me, my brother and all our other friends who had to keep bouncing from one house to another every few days so we could be able to spend time with both our parents.

They called it shared custody. I called it a pain in the ass.

But when you're 12, no one really asks for your opinion.

Two houses

In the beginning, my mother got an ex-weekdays and my father got us on weekends. Rules were rules. It didn't matter that dad's house was only 20 minutes away from our schools and mom was 45 minutes away.

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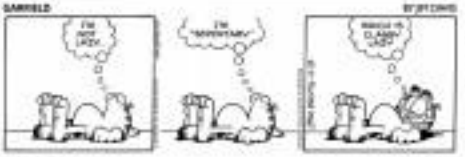
SAMSHILD BY JEFF DAVID



A. UPIN BY JESS ABRERA

PUGAD BABOY BY PH. GARCIA

DICK TRACY

LOVEANGETS BY ELIZABETH CHICHOLO

JAMES BOND

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PANILAYAO

SHORT BLUES BY JUNO SCOTT

TULDOK BY MARK COLL

BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

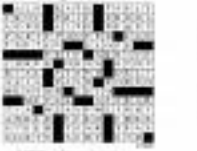
ATOMIC AND MISSY BY LYRA SARCELLANO

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

OKEE MACHINE BY NIKKO ABRERA

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

4	2							
5		7						
	6		1		9			
		1		6		5		
			8			7	1	
		5						2
			4	7		6		8
				9				5
					5	2	3	

Difficulty Level ★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

7	5	6	2	1	9	4	8	3
2	4	3	8	7	6	1	5	9
8	1	9	5	3	4	2	7	6
6	8	1	7	4	3	5	9	2
3	9	5	6	8	2	7	4	1
4	7	2	1	9	5	3	6	8
9	3	7	4	6	1	8	2	5
1	2	4	9	5	8	6	3	7
5	6	8	3	2	7	9	1	4

Are you held hostage by the tutor?

By Joy Rojas
Contributor

TRUST AN EDUCATOR TO KNOW exactly why our local education system is the way it is. According to longtime educator Emily Bongcon, Filipino students learn only as much as they do in school today because of a number of factors.

"First, there are too many of them in class," she says. "How do you expect a teacher, regardless of how efficient he or she is, to attend to 50 different personalities at one time?"

Remember is another reason. While the most qualified teachers leave their jobs and country for higher pay, less qualified teachers simply take over. "If bad tenure schools are so desperate, they'll just accept," right Bongcon.

Adding a year to high school or college will not help, she believes. "You have to give education better attention," she says. "so you have to change the entire education system, and that's going to take years."

Parental attention supplement what kids learn in school, but even that can be tricky. Bongcon, who founded a month ago, notes when she runs into school, didn't appreciate the set-up because it "made me dependent on my tutor."

Ruth Ibay, the Assumption College teachers would experience the other side of the coin when she herself became a private tutor. "I was on call 20 weekends, especially when a student had exams on a Monday," she recalls. "If I got sick, the parents would panic! It's nice to be needed, but eventually I realized, this isn't healthy for either of us."

These days, Bongcon is still "making a difference in children's lives," but this time, in a manner he/she feel will help the educators

(STANDING) Gay Tivora and Emily Bongcon confer with one of the teachers of the Tutoring Club.

Tutoring must be an aid, not dependency. At the Club, students learn more than the three Rs in 12 hours tops

TRIVIA. Ting Feliciano and Bongcon at the Tutoring Club

and love each one.

Greater self-confidence

Launched last January, Tutoring Club is a UK-based after-school learning system that offers not only a marked academic improvement in penmanship, elementary, and high school reading, writing, and math, but a greater sense of self-confidence and independence as well. Teachers range from those with actual experience before students to professionals like engineers who have seminars for the entire profession.

All undergo a two-week training before they're assigned to students Bongcon feels they will be most effective with: some prefer older kids, others have a genuine liking for children.

"I believe in the system," says Bongcon who runs the center for Live Aid, Dear Ateneo Prime, 327 Rockefeller St., Salcedo Village, Makati, tel.: 844-7366 and 0920-9533913) with Gay Tivora and Ting Feliciano.

For starters, students undergo a diagnostic test to pinpoint where they are in their problem subject. The test may reveal, for instance, a third-grade student with difficulty in reading (seeing the shift of vowels and gazzles. Worksheets and an individualized program should equip the student with the appropriate skills for his grade level—all that is possible in 12 hours tops.

That the Tutoring Club adheres to a finite number of hours to teach students (classes last an hour, the center is closed on weekends, and doesn't give homework) appeals to Bongcon. "You're not holding the parents or the kids hostage to a tutoring center," she says. "And because a tutor isn't always there, that allows a student to practice the skills he learned on his own, which builds independence and self-esteem."

Reinforcement

Learning is apparently conducive in this center—bright and spacious. Bean bags, cushions, and attractive incentives: students who do well get anything, from tokens and toys, to gift certificates for their others. "Of course, everybody likes it, but not everybody gets one," says Bongcon with a smile. "At least it's positive reinforcement."

Whatever it is, it seems to be working. In the three months the center has been operating, Bongcon notes how a little boy "who can't sit over the place" and on the verge of being kicked out of school has since toned down misbehavioral on his math. "His mom is amazed," she says.

Another mom who was in the center in the morning was pleased to report about her son's consistently perfect grades. He's in Tutoring Club's enrichment program, a service designed to keep smart kids at the top of their class. Apparently, the enrichment programs is the most popular service of Tutoring Club, as of writing.

"He thought it would be math," says Bongcon. "But I did a little research, and I found out our clientele, which consists mostly of Koreans and Japanese kids, are already good in math. They want to improve their English writing skills because their parents plan to send them to US schools."

With a smile, the educator says, "We're learning a lot, too."

How parents can boost kids' learning

By Pargie Rugo-Reyes

A DAY OF DISCOVERING CHILDren's fundamental abilities, Kinderworld's "Made in Progress: A Playtime Child's Journey to Progressive Learning" was a play-and-learn activity held in various schools and malls around the country. It also gathered some of the country's top child-development experts who shared their knowledge on how parents can maximize their kids' learning potentials.

"Kids nowadays are bombarded with external realities," said Dr. Lin Interup, pediatrician from St. Luke's Medical Center. "They're trapped in front of a computer most of the day thereby diminishing the use of their potential abilities."

Made in Progress aimed to stimulate the six domains of development to guarantee the optimal learning of each child—gross motor, fine motor, cognitive, language, personal and socio-emotional....Literally encompassing the whole mind growth.

Worth partnered with Camp Explorer, a group that handles year-round camps and kids' workshops, to assist in engaging kids' different capacities.

Holding the event at the sprawling Shangri-La Plaza Shopping Mall, kids aged three to seven were treated to safe, experiential learning activities to enhance the six domains of development.

Activities included the Entrepreneur, where kids were through a spider web-like maze showing how flexible and alert they were as they crawled and skipped past the obstacles. This guaranteed that the child's gross motor skills were honed.

Children also participated in the Problem Handling activity to help improve their fine motor skills. Kids determined each race with several pre-made paper boats. They possibly displayed their unique colorful designs later.

Waste segregation relay

To build on their life purpose and social-emotional skills, Camp Explorer held a Waste Segregation Relay game where kids picked up "wastes" labeled "paper" and "plastic," and disposed of them into the proper trash cans.

The last activity was the Interactive Storytelling, where kids sat and grabbed around as Bobo troubadour Ray Ventura Jr. improvised their cognitive and language skills.

"These activities would surely help develop each child according to his/her talent and progress," said Jacking. "For the children and the youth of today to grow up into mature individuals, they should start young with

STORYTELLING sessions are designed to build motor tasks and education.

playing and also helping themselves."

Parents definitely play a big role in the development of their kids, having said. It pays a lot to be involved in their activities and guiding them in their journey of self-discovery and achievement and progress, she added.

While the kids were engaged in educational activities, their parents gathered in a soundproof room to listen to a child specialist who discussed hopefully the six domains of child development.

Inviting president a detailed approach to helping parents optimize the learning abilities of their children. They should learn proper nutrition-ality of better that affect development and learning, as well as proper understanding of socialized parents and partners that facilitate learning. She provided guidelines for parents or caregivers on materials necessary to help give that passionate desire, opinion and learning.

"Made in Progress was an ideal learning experience for both parents and kids," said Rachel Tiongson, Worth senior product manager. "We came up with this project because we realized that working parents don't have enough time anymore to study or really understand how they could enhance the kids' learning abilities. We'd like to give them [kids] going out of their way to inquire from their parents/en, which is so costly. With this activity, Worth brought the necessary info and not to parents' out there and made it accessible to them for free."

What it feels like to be a 'ping-pong kid'

Quick links

Sharing custody? These websites might help

- **Shared Parenting Books**
  http://www.sharedparenting-works.org
- **How To Make Shared Custody Work**
  http://www.ahrweb.com/articles/2005/shared-custody.html
- **Equally Shared Parenting**
  http://equallysharedparenting.com/blogger.html
- **Divorce Still: Shared Custody**
  http://www.divorcestill.com/faq/shared-custody
- **Friends.com: Making Shared Custody Work**
  http://www.parents.com/family/divorce/coping/making-shared-custody-work/

From page 1

second time on four years.

It wasn't fun. I hated having to pack my stuff every few days. I kept leaving things behind. And I kept needing things that were in the other house. Schoolbooks, shirts, shoes—some of them even seemed to be in the right houses. And I never knew which address to write down.

Holidays were divided, too, just like summer vacation. If you spent Christmas with dad's side of the family, you spent New Year's at mom's.

Not that we didn't have fun with our cousins. It was great to get to know each of them away from the tensions and without worrying that a fight was about to break out over minutes. But it would have been great if we didn't have to keep lugging ourselves and our things back and forth from a week. It was just exhausting.

Things changed a bit in college. By then, my sport schedules at dad's and weekends at mom's. I was more children than and would occasionally hand the rules and skip weekends.

For adults in the family, tried to do what they could to make things easy for me and for my brother. But they couldn't give us the one thing we needed—the security of living in just one home. The price of their freedom was our stability.

Still lucky

But I guess I was still lucky. I know ping-pong siblings who were divided by their parents and who barely saw each other. At least my brother and I bounced from one house to the other together. At least I had an ally, someone who knew exactly what I was going through.

I called him up last week and asked what he thought about our childhood setup. He spoke as though he was reading an index. He hated how stressful it was, how he kept losing things behind. He said, "Most people have parenting. We were kids and we were the right to have a mother."

It's been years since my parents split up, and they continue to stay apart. But my brother and I are no longer ping-pong kids. We've settled now. Mom, we pack only when we want to.

I still use ping-pong kids around me. Some say cousins, others are friends. I feel for them, I really do, because I know the pain of being forced to live in two homes.

Rockwell Land: Credibility and Progress Amidst Uncertainty

Rockwell Center

The 2-loft unit, first introduced to the market in Number One Rockwell, will also be available at The Grove by Rockwell.

Rockwell Land is known to be an innovator in the real estate property industry. And Number One Rockwell proves just that as it makes its mark in the brilliance of its design and irrefutable functionality. Having broken ground in 2007, the distinctive outline of Number One Rockwell is highly anticipated to be one of the most spectacular residential skyscrapers to grace the Makati skyline next year.

Yet there's more to Number One Rockwell than just a unique architectural design. It is a testament on how solid an investment a Rockwell property is. In a present economic slowdown where the threat of dead-end investments looms at every turn, the rise of Number One Rockwell continues to go forward — steady and unscathed. This is due to the developers' unquestionable credibility, their unwavering commitment to stakeholders, and their capability to deliver despite the odds. These are the signature characteristics that make up the guiding principles of Rockwell Land.

Rockwell successfully weathered the Asian economic crisis in the late 1990s by simultaneously building the four prestigious towers of The West Block. The property was completed and delivered on schedule, which today stands as an industry benchmark for quality and premium lifestyle.

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For more information, visit The Grove by Rockwell model units at Power Plant Mall or call 750-0888. Log on to www.e-rockwell.com.

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Rockwell, Ortigas.

Number One Rockwell | Rising to set a distinctive in the Makati skyline by 2010.

A new Rockwell rises | The Grove by Rockwell (right), Rockwell's expansion area beyond Rockwell Center.

Editor Ernesto G. Yabut

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A comic mom's tears

By Marinell B. Cruz

FOR TWO HOURS EVERY DAY, CANDY Pangilinan turns on her portable DVD player, full volume, as diverse cast her son's watching from the room across hers.

Quentin, 5, has Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) with Asperger's Syndrome, diagnosed when he was just 3 years old.

"Quentin cries a lot during sessions with his therapist because, like all kids with developmental problems, Quentin hates change and being given orders," Candy told the listeners. "So I need to be diverted, or I'll go crazy."

Thanks to therapy, the actress said, Quentin is less anxious and irritable now. "There was a time when my friends thought a new boyfriend was hearing me up. But it was all from Quentin's outbursts (prompted mainly) hitting and kicking," the comedian said.

Once, she recalled, she kept interrupting the session, hearing the therapist frustrated. "She told me, 'Ms Candy, I just want to remind you no waiting (outside)—no peek.'"

Everyone at home is used to the boy's crying spells now, Candy said, but it used to be "really" bad. "Once, my mom couldn't stand his crying, so she barged into the room and told Quentin's teacher, 'Ipaso na ng-aaway-awayan.'"

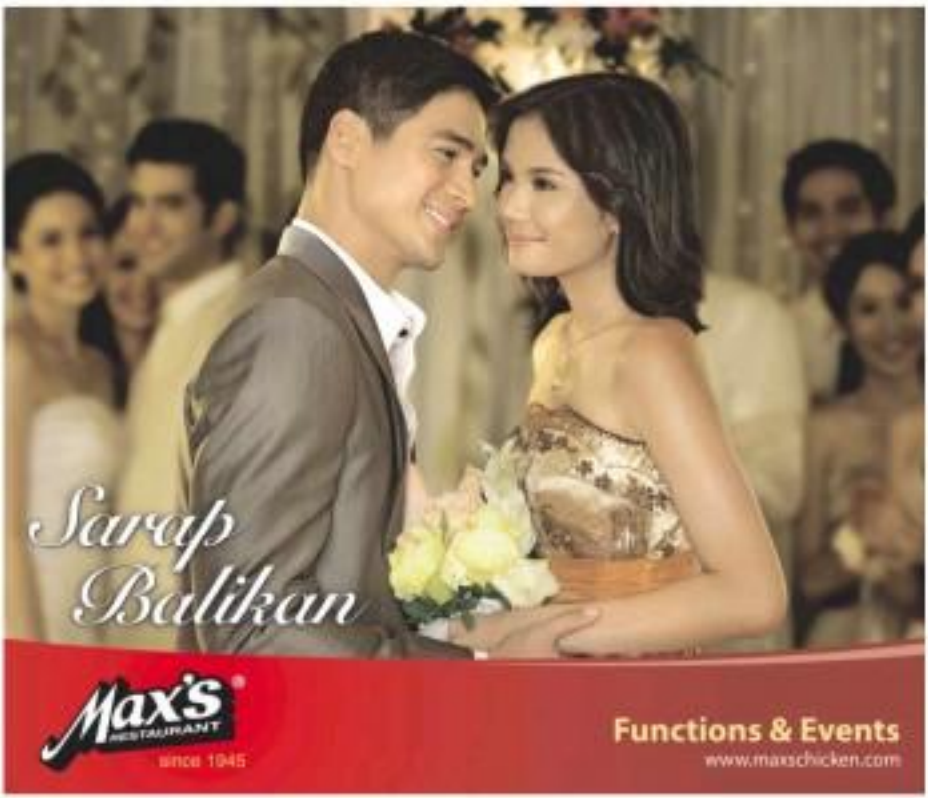
Candy first noticed that Quentin was "different" when he was 9 months old. "He was prescribed corrective eyeglasses at that age, with 100 grade

CANDY Pangilinan with son Quentin

A COMICS

ANGEL Locsin, Dingdong Romuáldez, Iya Villania and Sam Milby

Shooting in Seoul, oh so good for Angel, Sam! Dollywood /F3



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Meet & Greet at Glorietta 5 Atrium, 5:30pm

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Seoul searching for Angel, Sam

SAM and Angel in Seoul

ANGEL LOCSIN, Sam Milby, Heather Gonzalez, Rhandley Rosario and Iya Villania told me they had a splendid time shooting some scenes of the upcoming Pinoy version of the Koreanovela "Only You" in Seoul, even if it was freezing cold.

I taught Dirl a few basic Korean words before he flew to the Land of the Morning Calm, since I spent many summers and winters there many lonely years ago.

On Angel Locsin's first

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

take (angellocsin.multiply.com), there's no suggesting pull that asks if Sam Milby is the prettiest leading man for Angel. As I saw it, they are so well-suited for each other on screen, they may just be so.

By turn, I'm sure Gel's boyfriend Luis Manzano is tenacious to jealousy at times and is secure in the thought of being Angel's "only you."

Let the pictures say the rest. Ignito (That's "beautiful" in Korean)!

A comic...

From page F1

issues," she said. "He could not talk or stand when he should."

Scary if Quentin's condition came when Candy had just broken up with the boy's father. She recounted, "I skipped do-mid stage and simply asked the doctor what should be done. I felt better when the doctor told me, 'It's not your fault. You're here — this means you're prepared to help him.'"

Candy learned that stress during pregnancy was among the possible causes of the disorder. "Things weren't going well between me and Quentin's father while I was pregnant," she explained.

Missing father

Another reason, Candy noted, was an unexpected complication when she delivered. "We couldn't find Quentin's father; whose signature was needed before I could be operated on. Because of the delay, Quentin may have suffered a lack of oxygen in the brain." Also, she said, it could be a case of genes that didn't match.

Not all parents react the same way to the problem, she also learned. "Some find it hard to accept. They resist their children's condition here and there," she observed. "Those are the kids who budget?" I tell parents who come to me for advice to talk to developmental doctors immediately."

She continued, "I tell them that, in the very least, the kids' fine motor skills should be developed. Imagine a 13-year-old who still can't go to the bathroom on his own."

Like many others with ADHD, Quentin has very high IQ, but with an EQ that's at least three years delayed. "He's catching up really fast," said Candy. "His doctors said this was because of the dedicated people who are helping him," said Candy. "My mom has also been praying non-stop for him."

E-mail: mcruz@inquirer.com.ph

ROCHELLE Pangilinan, Alfia Medina and Michelle Villanueva

Bristling...

From page F1

Street's security issues

Sexy Starlet raised brows among island revelers because she was constantly surrounded by uniformed bodyguards—like a superstar. Maybe because, at the time, she was the biggest sex object by default, since Sharing Horvilla and Bataly had left, according to insiders Rose regulus.

SB was overheard asking the front-desk personnel of a posh resort: "Is your security sufficient? I need some extra measures." Why, we wonder? Is this because the source of her unexplained wealth comes with enemies sides?

Lonely Wolf

Following his latest Boracay raised-eyebrows, Andrew Wolff was often seen alone throughout his stay in Boro. "People were avoiding him," said a mole. "They were afraid he might get involved in yet another fight."

Willie at rest

Also spotted in Boracay last week was controversial "Pinoywood" host Willie Revillame. He certainly made heads turn, a source noted, arriving almost the spiffy million-peso yacht.

Affair with The Boss

FREEHOLD, New Jersey—Arthur Kelly, a New Jersey man divorcing his wife Ann, has accused rock star Bruce Springsteen of having an affair with her in papers filed March 27 in Monmouth County Appellate Court. Springsteen, 59, did not immediately return calls for comment. Reuters

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4 THE UNBORN	4 THE UNBORN
5 KNOWING	5 KNOWING
6 THE SECRET OF MOONACRE	6 MONSTERS vs. ALIENS

ILOILO

Bristling in Boracay

By the Entertainment staff

CONCERNED CELEBRITY, A REGULAR visitor to Boracay, is appalled by the high-profile conflicts that occurred on the island during the Holy Week.

First, model Andrew Wolff, reportedly ordered a security guard's gun. Then, beauty queen Daniella Cuthbert figured in a hot brawl. Now comes a glass-throwing incident involving the Seahorse Bounce and a human-rights advocate. Incidents like these paint a negative image of the island, and DOT.

Seahorse explosion

Joshua Gideon Formentera, president of the NGO Positive Action Foundation, sent a statement to Starbar describing what transpired between him and Seahorse Bounce's Rochelle Delgado and Arthur Bilabas on Thursday at the Crystal Beach resort.

Formentera said the altercation was sparked by the dissers' "embarrassing" behavior. When he "asked them to quiet down," he said, they started "shooting stares" back at him.

Another girl (later identified in a statement from the Seahorse Dancers' camp) in their group, Michelle Villanueva, threw a glass at Mr. Boy Abunda's table, shattering in two locations that had to be stitched. No one was hit, but Formentera claimed that's only because he "ducked in time."

In her own e-mailed statement, Seahorse Dancers manager Joy Concio said Villanueva did hit Formentera with the glass but only because she thought he was going to throw a bottle at Bilabas. The girl claimed the glass caused those Formentera cheated that's.

Bombshell busted

While a flurry of fisticuffs rocked the seafront area, Bombshow Bombshell was making love, not war. Although the two supposedly never say cuss words, Forever Friends, a movie spotted her with Paulilly Ford, a recent co-star on a TV show. They had just met, but EB worked her charms really well. The two were seen entering an upscale hotel ... at 4 a.m.!

RUSHES

By Rayuel San Diego Jr.

PLAYFULLY SHE TOLD THE PAPERS IN A 2004 interview that she could write quite an engrossing memoir—and the most colorful chapters would be about her love life.

Tita Muñoz was quick to add, however, that she would take to the grave all the names of her former lovers. Like the true lady that she was, the Dutch-born star of stage and screen kept her word.

Dalisay-goers agreed that Muñoz, who passed away at 82 on Holy Saturday after a lingering illness, consistently personified elegance.

Gilda Bonnemaison Lambeno pointed out: "Her passing has left an indelible void ... she was the last great embodiment of beauty and acting talent in the Filipino ethnic universe."

RP's Elizabeth Taylor

Her screen persona—from her debut in Sampaguita Films' "Bondadit" in 1952 to her last appearance in Star Cinema's "Mahirap" in 1996—was often equated with the aloof, unattainable coquette. She was once dubbed "Elizabeth Taylor of the Philippines."

Filmmaker Lino Brocka, who directed Muñoz in "Island of Desire" in 1998, recounted: "She always had a delicacy of expression. Whenever I needed to cast a tomato character with grace, it had to be Tita."

Agnes Rosenstiehl Joel Lamangan, who directed her in TV shows: "She had an incomparable, luminous presence."

But whether she had an eternally youthful and maidenly-cute streak. After the public critics in the heyday of one of her last appearances, she expressed elation over the fact: "The country's first multimedia star."

Indeed, few could claim what Muñoz achieved in her five-decade career, having worked in radio, theater, TV and the movies.

She recounted that she and friends co-star Ronald Poray also made history with local TV's first kissing scene in the movie. "I pleaded Ronald because he was always near," she said.

The pioneering actress made several international movies with National Artists Gerry de Leon and Lamberto Avellana in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1998, she played Hong Kong actor Leslie Cheung's mother in "Wong Kar-Wai's "Days of Being Wild."

Theater troupe mentor

Today's generation may only know her for her TV and movie roles and as the aunt of actors Lorenzo and Carlo Muñoz, but the actress is best remembered as well for her immense contribution to Philippine theater.

Bicolo Antonio Noe organized what two years ago, Muñoz, then a recovering stroke patient, was set to do readings of Tennessee Williams' "A Streetcar Named Desire" and "The Glass Menagerie" with theater G. Toengi and Tommy Abad. "But she had to back out," Noe said.)

In the 1970s, Muñoz relocated to Mexico City to oversee the theater troupe Grupo Rentavalia, at the Ibirdamas State University. She told the inquirer: "There we were tolerated."

Beloved Socorro Nord, Rentavalia's executive director: "She was a mother to us all. She taught [us] how to meditate." For that, Muñoz was "labeled a witch," Nord recalled, "but she was unperturbed. Her meditation classes grew to an outer glow."

In the mid-1990s, Muñoz, incapacitating from two stroke attacks, was confined to Tiyan Puso in a hospital. Wanting to help, Tiyan Puso organized prayer and fund-raising activities, but Muñoz got irked, the comedienne related: "She was adamant about staying independent." When she herself had a mild stroke in 2007, Tiyan Puso said, Muñoz called "to offer her love and prayers."

DID YOU KNOW...

Sandoff show

CENTRIA ALEGRIA and Nyko Mica+Diego—and ...two Filipino actors with a wealth of information and diverse backgrounds—perform on April 17 at the BBC Trial, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, in an event billed as Jack Daniel's Global Jukin. Tour Philippines.

The show serves as a sendoff to Alexander and Mica, who will represent the country when the two celebrities to Mix it in the Hard Rock Cafe Singapore.

The promoters started sponsoring Mary bands in 2004 in the vines. On performers were Bolding, Twisted Halo and Parokyakeleon.

Three years later, various top of the row included Imposter Bell included Chicozi and Jason Ap Cuny Quino, Junior Abel, Tropical Depression, Jr Coy and Rockfish and Shipwrecks, Chillers, Combos, Jetdriving, Razorback and Radioactive Sarpotpod.

Ticket holders at the BBC Trial guy will have a chance to take a free trip to the Singapore show.